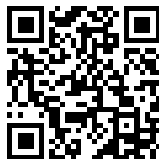

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A CHARGE,
&c. &c.

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CHARGE

DELIVERED AT THE VISITATION

OF

THOMAS ELRINGTON, D.D. M.R.I.A.

LORD BISHOP OF LEIGHLIN AND FERNS,

IN AUGUST, 1828.

DUBLIN:

**RICHARD MILLIKEN AND SON,
GRAFTON-STREET,
BOOKSELLERS TO THE UNIVERSITY;
AND C. AND J. RIVINGTON, LONDON.**

1828.

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R. GRAISBERRY, Printer to the University.

A CHARGE,

&c. &c.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

WHEN I last addressed you, I felt it to be incumbent upon me to enter somewhat minutely into the duties, which had arisen from the change in the dispositions of very many of our Roman Catholic Brethren, and to lay before you my sentiments as to the manner, in which the discussions arising in consequence of that change, ought on our part to be carried on. It appeared to me, and I have no reason to alter the opinion I then formed, that to urge upon the Roman Catholics the duty of making themselves acquainted with the will of God by studying the Book, which is able to make man wise unto salvation, was the first and best means of effecting among them that change of opinions, which we deem to be the bringing them from error the most dangerous, to the pure doctrines of the Gospel. Acknowledging, as they do, that Book to be given by inspiration of

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God, its claim to be profitable to us for doctrine, and for instruction in righteousness, stands upon an authority which they cannot question; and when they consider, that it claims also to be capable of making *the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*, it seems difficult for them to deny, that we are right in relying upon it as the foundation of our faith, and rejecting whatever it does not enable us to prove.

Five and thirty years (1) have now elapsed since the commencement of the plan to supply the poor of Ireland with the Word of God, at such prices as it might be in their power to give. Rapidly, from that period, has the Association, in which the plan originated, increased in influence and in utility; its effects are felt in every part of the kingdom, and have been powerfully aided by a Society, which about fourteen years afterwards was formed for the purpose of promoting the distribution of the Sacred Volume (2). The progress however made among the Roman Catholics was not rapid,—I recollect, though after an interval of more than twenty years, that the surprise which I felt at being applied to for a New Testament by a Roman Catholic, when Rector of a parish in the North of Ireland, was not less than the gratification which I experienced in supplying him with it: and even

within the last three years, we have it stated in the evidence of a Roman Catholic well acquainted with the province of which he spoke, (3) that in many places in the west of Ireland the peasantry did not know that such a book as the Bible existed. But a great and happy change has been effected within that period, and those who were most hostile to the circulation of the Bible among their laity, are now evidently unwilling to avow, that they wish to exercise any prohibitory power with respect to it (4). They affect to say, that their objection, so far as regards the reading of the Bible by persons of mature years, relates only to our translation, as being unfaithful ; and they seem to confine their active hostility to the use of it in schools. As to the former, you should be prepared, my Reverend Brethren, to meet it upon every occasion, by making yourselves acquainted with their objections. These are very few in number, and such as no scholar can be at a loss to reply to. They have indeed a formidable appearance by being published in a quarto volume, but when that volume is looked into, we find that a great part of it relates to versions of the Scriptures by the early Puritans, with which we have no concern, as the book itself to which I allude, *Ward's Errata of the Protestant Bible*, will shew upon simple inspection (5).

It is only to be wished, that the spirit of in-

quiry which has gone abroad in this country, may lead the Roman Catholics to compare our version with that recommended to them by their Clergy, and the consequence will be, their giving to ours a decided preference.

To the reading of the Scriptures in schools an objection is made by the Roman Catholic Clergy, which were it founded in fact, would certainly have great weight. It is, that they are used as a *horn book*, out of which children are taught their earliest reading lessons. I trust that in the schools under your inspection, my Reverend Brethren, they are never so employed. I rely upon your vigilance in restraining any teachers who may so employ them, if indeed any such do really exist.

Another objection I must notice, it is, that children are given the most difficult parts of Scripture to read, instead of the Gospels and Acts. There are few among you, my Brethren, who have not heard me express in very strong terms my opinion upon this subject. I believe the objection now to be totally unfounded, and I believe also, that very few schools were ever liable to it. It seems to me evident, that the Histories of our Blessed Lord and of his Apostles, not only are the parts of Scripture most useful to children, but that no person whatever can read the subsequent parts of the New Testament with profit, till he has made himself intimately

acquainted with them, and imbibed deeply the pure and holy Spirit which they breathe.

The objection made by the Roman Catholic Clergy to the reading of the Scriptures in schools (6) has been the source of much mischief, great numbers of those who were benefiting by the instruction which they liberally dispensed to the poor Roman Catholics, who could not afford the expense of paying a schoolmaster, have been withdrawn in consequence of it. But we are not justified in sacrificing the duty which calls upon us to disseminate the Gospel, by relaxing our rules with respect to its being universally read. We are not to do evil through the hope, that our wrong doing will be productive of good. We must not make ourselves accomplices with those, who wish to conceal from man the commandments, which God hath given to him for the direction of his conduct, and the Covenant which he hath established by the one great Mediator for the remission of his sins. We become criminal in the sight of the Almighty, when we assist in any way to prevent his revealed will from being known to his creatures in that form, and in those words, in which he chose to declare it.

The Word of God must be read in all our schools; effectively read, by all who can read with fluency, not keeping the promise to the

ear only, while it is observed neither in spirit nor in truth ; not selecting a few verses of little importance, and having them, and them only, read.

It is my express direction, that you should take effectual care, that the whole of the Gospels and the Acts are read in your schools, and I will add, in all the schools in your several parishes, which receive assistance from those Societies, which make the reading the Scriptures the condition, upon which that assistance is given. With respect to the remaining parts of the Holy Scriptures, a latitude of discretion must be left as to what shall be read, and what postponed, observing however, that the remark made by St. Augustine upon the Epistles of St. James, St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude, as having been written to correct the misinterpretation of St. Paul's doctrine as to justification by faith, (7) should give them a preference, and shews it to be expedient, that they should be read next after the Gospels and Acts. And to this it is the more important to attend, from the continued misrepresentations of our doctrine by the Roman Catholic Clergy, who teach their congregations to believe, that we despise the moral law, and rely for salvation upon faith, unconnected with good works ; that faith which being alone, St. James rightly designates as *dead* ; and the possessor of which, if he be

without charity, that comprehensive word which includes all the moral virtues, St. Paul emphatically pronounces to be *nothing*.

But while adverting to the means which are given us to do good unto all men, let us recollect, that we are specially called upon to regard those, who are of the household of faith ; that while desirous of adding to our flock those who have strayed into another fold, imagining it to be that which is governed by the true Shepherd, we should take care to preserve all those who already belong to us, and to protect them from the arts, which will be made use of to delude them. We belong to a Church which declares, "that the Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation, and that nothing shall be required to be believed as an article of faith, or to be thought necessary to salvation, which cannot be proved thereby." But that Church has declared what things it holds to be capable of such proof, and consequently requisite to be acknowledged by its members. It is our duty, therefore, to teach what those things are, which our Church believes to be contained in the Scriptures ; and as we differ entirely from the Church of Rome in our ideas of the authority of a Church to require implicit submission to its decrees on points of faith, it is our duty also to

shew on what proofs those articles of faith are founded.

In this we follow the example of the earliest antiquity, by giving familiar instructions to the ignorant, and requiring from them an account of the profit which they have made by them ; and we adopt the advice of a reformer, who of all those that renounced the Church of Rome, was the least likely to be influenced in his opinions by any authority, unless it perfectly agreed with his own judgment. We find Calvin, in treating of the Romish Sacrament of Confirmation, concluding his observations by saying, that the ancient form of confirmation required, that the person to be confirmed should be catechised as to his faith in the face of the congregation. And he then proceeds to give his opinion, that the best mode of catechising would be, to have a formulary written, containing and familiarly explaining the chief articles of our faith, according to which the interrogatories should be made openly before the congregation : and he adds, that if such discipline prevailed, the parents would be awakened to activity, by the public disgrace attending upon the neglect they were too apt to shew to the education of their children ; and that Christians would agree better in their faith, nor through ignorance be liable to be

led away by new and strange doctrines, their knowledge being reduced to method (8).

You will observe, my Reverend Brethren, that Calvin, to whom the praise of freedom from worldly mindedness in matters of religion is undoubtedly due, scrupled not to employ the fear of public disgrace as an auxiliary in religious instruction ; he did not deem it sinful to stimulate the parent to exertion by that fear ; and it is obvious, that the same influence must have extended itself to the child, who if rejected for his ignorance, must have been exposed equally with his parent to public shame. Calvin, had an objection been made to his so doing, would readily have referred the objector to an authority he could not dare to withstand. He would have quoted St. Paul : *Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.* He would have referred to the still stronger expressions of that great Apostle : *Whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think of these things.*

Of the manner in which catechetical instruction was carried on in the early ages, we have an account in a treatise of St. Augustine, written expressly upon the subject. (9) The art of printing being then unknown, and of course the arts of reading and writing confined

to a few, it was necessary for the catechist to give oral instruction, and two examples of the nature of that instruction we find in the treatise, to which I refer. From these it appears, that the instruction was public, and the catechumen publicly interrogated as to his belief, and advantage was taken of the desire of approbation, common to the human mind, in the very outset of the proceeding. It is first inquired, what has induced him to seek to become a Christian? And if to this he gives a satisfactory answer, the catechist is directed, by St. Augustine, "though he believes it to be false, yet to build upon it as if it were true, and to applaud the good design; as by such approbation and praise the catechumen will be induced to wish to be that in reality, which he had only pretended." And wisely did the good Father judge in giving this advice, for well he knew, that the attention once excited to religious inquiries, though that attention had commenced from a vain and empty cause, yet the mind, under judicious management, would be led into the way of truth, and even he who came to deceive, would learn to pray.

This progress of religion in the soul, St. Augustine appears to have been led to expect, from considering how the fear of God, the lowest motive to obedience, becomes the source

of that love in which the perfection of a Christian consists. He observes, (10) that very few, nay none became Christians who were not in some degree influenced by the fear of God, and he briefly traces their progress. The fear of God leads to the desire of being loved by him ; that desire suggests the sentiment, that being loved, we should love Him who loved us ; and thence immediately springs up the principle of avoiding whatever might be displeasing to God, without any consideration of the consequences that might ensue, which principle is the love of God in its purest form.

Catechetical instruction has been resorted to in Ireland to a very great extent and with very great advantage (11). It has been connected with instruction in the Scriptures calculated not only to preserve our congregations from diminution, but to enable many of them to be ready instruments in the hands of Providence for extending that knowledge, which they possess, to their neighbours who are kept in darkness. Let us pray that such knowledge may be increased, and let us use our best efforts to promote it.

With scarcely an exception, there had long been but one opinion among the Clergy, of every rank, in Ireland, that the system of exa-

minations patronized by the Association for promoting the knowledge of the Christian Religion, offers the best mode of assisting those efforts. It is unnecessary for me to enter into the detail of that system, as it has long been universally known. But I feel it important to prevent some objections to it, which lately have been revived, from spreading to its disadvantage. Examinations, it is said, rest upon emulation, and are calculated to encourage it, and emulation is an unchristian principle. This summary objection I shall beg leave to put at once out of the way, by a single verse from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, c. xi. v. 14 : "*If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.*" Who, after being reminded of these words, will venture to say, that emulation is an unchristian principle? (12) Yet I am obliged to answer these objections more at length, as the subject has been formally discussed in a tract which is widely circulated, and attention has been particularly drawn to it within the last month, in a publication which may have influence upon some of those who hear me (13).

The exciting children to exertion, we are there told, is sometimes attempted by the distribution of rewards addressed to their ava-

rice or their vanity. To prevent expense, tickets of very small value are given for every well said lesson, for every performance of an act of common duty; and thus, it is objected, those very instructors who in theory teach this principle, that if man had done all his duty, he would still be an unprofitable servant, are made, by a practical inconsistency, to treat every performance of duty as deserving a reward.

There is really in this objection a confusion of ideas to which it would be difficult to find a parallel. That children might be tempted to diligence by improper rewards is quite certain,—but does that prove that no proper rewards can be found for them? An article of luxury might tempt,—does that make it improper to supply the defects of necessary clothing? The writer himself admits that it does not, for he afterwards classes such articles among the rewards which may with advantage be bestowed. A book of idle amusement might entice to diligence,—does that prove that it would be mischievous to bestow a Bible?

But “though we do our best, we are unprofitable servants, and therefore we should not receive rewards.” What a strange mixture of ideas is here! Man can never do any thing by which

the Deity can be advantaged, and therefore can never have a right to call upon the Deity for payment of his services. True ; but what objection can be derived from this, to the giving a child a book as a reward for diligence and good conduct. The child knows perfectly well, that it is not a debt which he has any other right to claim, than that which arises from the voluntary kindness of the giver, to whom his diligence has been of no possible advantage. He is so far from being in danger of considering the giving that book as inconsistent with his being unprofitable, that nothing can be better calculated to impress upon his mind the idea of a reward, as a free gift, distinct from payment to which he has a right. Nothing can be better calculated to supply the instructor with an illustration of that infinite goodness, which we are to look to for every good and perfect gift.

But after these objections to rewards, which if they were worth any thing, or had any rational foundation, would prove that no rewards of any kind should be given, what is the very next sentence we meet with ? “ Reward, in its proper place, is a legitimate agent, and recommended by the highest authority. It constituted part of the Divine economy under the Jewish dispensation !” And this sentence, and the argu-

ment against giving any reward, as being an act inconsistent with the doctrines of Revelation, lie upon the same page !

We go a little farther, and we find occasion to remark still greater confusion of ideas. We are told that “ a well disposed boy finds sufficient inducements to exertion in his sense of its necessity, in the esteem of the master, the good opinion of his fellows, the delight of his parents.” Now, as to the boy’s sense of the necessity of his exertion, what is it necessary for ? It must be to avoid some evil, or to obtain some good, to escape punishment, or to obtain reward. *The esteem of his master*—will the boy value that, if it never manifests itself, and if it does manifest itself, must it not be by some distinction between him and others,—that is, by some reward ? *The good opinion of his fellows*—will that be esteemed, if bestowed alike upon all, and is not such good opinion a reward ? *The delight of his parents*—how is that to be shewn without making a distinction between him and his brothers, or between the conduct of his parents towards him, and the conduct of other parents towards children, who have misconducted themselves. But what do we find next ? “ Reward, when it is thought proper, should come to him as a reward, not be presented to him as a motive.” Truly, this is a marvellous contrivance ; it should be so ma-

naged, that children who are good and diligent shall receive rewards, and not know of their connexion with that goodness and diligence! In truth, the sentence is absolute nonsense, for the word *reward* means a recompense for good performed, and reward had been acknowledged by this writer as a legitimate agent: How could it act, if no expectation preceded the giving of it?

The writer seems to have had extraordinary powers of abstraction. He separates the reward from the conduct for which it is given. He then supposes it to be so given, that the child shall believe it never can be repeated, for if it leads him to expect a repetition, then the next reward is of promise; and he goes still farther, and having blotted out the transaction from the memory of the child immediately concerned, he supposes it so managed, that no other child shall ever come to the knowledge of it; for if it be known to other children, then the fact of a reward having been given, operates as a promise that such rewards will be given, under similar circumstances, to them also.

We proceed a step farther, and he tells us, that if a child be trained by the principle of gross self interest, it is probable that

gross self interest will be the ruling principle of his life. It is but the giving a writer the liberty of calling any action by any name that he pleases to bestow upon it, and he will find no difficulty in arriving at any conclusion he may desire. When was it ever heard that a premium was sought on account of its pecuniary value? I have witnessed the effect of employing premiums to excite to exertion upon the most extended scale in the whole empire, (14) and that for more than half a century, and I never knew an instance in which the premium would not gladly have been exchanged for a mere certificate that it had been deserved, but that regulations existed, which prevented its being given to a person who had obtained one within the course of the preceding year.

Those who now object to encouraging good conduct by rewards, are not aware that they are making use of arguments which were employed in the beginning of the last century, by one of the most artful enemies of Christianity, who maintained, that the religion which professed to influence human conduct by the rewards and punishments of a future life, was injurious to morality. The writer, to whom I allude, is Lord Shaftesbury, who tells us, "that virtue has been made so mercenary a thing, and its rewards have been so

much talked of, that one can hardly tell what there is in it, after all, worth rewarding. For to be bribed only or terrified into an honest practice, bespeaks little either of real honesty or worth." And again, he says, "that the principle of self love, which is naturally so prevailing with us, being no way moderated or restrained, but rather improved and made stronger every day by the exercise of the passion in a subject of more extended self interest, (the rewards and punishments of a future life,) there may be reason to apprehend, lest the temper of this kind should extend itself in general through all parts of life:" and on the whole he maintains, "that the hope of future reward and fear of future punishment is utterly unworthy of the free spirit of a man, and only fit for those who are destitute of the first principles of common honesty; as being miserable, vile, and mercenary (15)." We can estimate the value of the arguments used against the encouragement given by premiums at our examinations, from seeing that they rest upon principles which, if followed to their full extent, must lead us to question whether man is not degraded by becoming a Christian.

But to return to the more direct consideration of our subject. Mischief, it is urged, may be done by the public exhibition of children for the purpose of examination and adjudication of premiums. Undoubtedly it may, and I agree

with this writer, that the examinations should be conducted with simplicity and comparative privacy. Nothing should be done for display and ostentation. But if the children are to be examined, they must be brought together, and examiners must be collected, and the friends of the children must not be excluded. I have seen many hundreds of children collected to be examined, and I never witnessed any thing that could be construed into a display capable of exciting vanity in any one of them.

But we are told, that "emulation is an evil passion;" and how is this proved? Why by defining it to be "the desire to make advance by the failure of others." That is, by giving to emulation the definition which belongs to envy. Where could the writer have learned the art of juggling thus with the meaning of words?

His applications of Scripture are as unhappy, as his definitions of words: we are warned, he says, that "whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased." Is a boy's obtaining a premium *exalting himself* in that sense in which the phrase is used by our blessed Lord? But even the ordinary practice of boys taking places in their several classes, in consequence of good answering, is brought within the censure pronounced against those who endeavour to sit down in the

highest room. In the former quotation, we had the words of Scripture misinterpreted, here we have a passage garbled to fit it for a meaning which the part omitted directly refutes. The parable proceeds to represent the Host as saying, *friend, go up higher*, and does not direct that the honour thus offered shall be refused.

The children who were misled by the false reasoning thus easily refuted, are stated to have refused to continue the practice of taking places of each other, when subsequently desired by their master so to do. I confess, I do not see in their thus assuming to know their duty better than their instructor, that submissive simplicity of mind, which I should wish to see in children. The narrative certainly had the effect of recalling to my recollection, that the most deplorable instance of vicious vanity which I ever met with, was exhibited by a boy taught in a school from which premiums were excluded ; and arose from the operation of that very system.

But what means are, according to this writer, to be used in order to excite children to that diligence, to which they certainly are not naturally inclined ? “ By engraving on their minds the fear and the love of God, in the first place.” This is a summary way of disposing of the difficulty, and it needs but to remark,

that the writer has forgot to tell us how to excite those dispositions of mind, previous to a child's obtaining that knowledge of the law and of the Gospel, necessary to produce them. The next instrument is, "the tender solicitations of the parent." It seems to be forgotten, that the system of premiums belongs to instruction in schools. That it is no objection to its utility, that a wise and pious parent might possibly instruct a well-disposed child without the use of premiums, and in the absence of the excitement of emulation—it may be observed, however, that this is only a possibility; that it is applicable only to the case where there is but one child to educate; (16) and that the general experience of mankind pronounces it improbable, that a child so educated, should have advantages over those who are trained in a different manner. Whether the cause of failure so general in such cases, is to be sought in the unfitness of the parent or the untowardness of the child, it matters not to inquire, cases of such private education having no relation whatsoever to the question under consideration.

But "a feeling of affection towards their instructors, will cause children to value their approving smile as a high reward, and the being seen by them behaving ill, as a severe punishment." Now, besides that the disposition which

this fear of being seen doing evil, is likely to produce in its immediate operation, namely, the exercise of cunning to conceal the fault, is the very worst that a child can be led into, we must remark, that this is another of those abstract possibilities which may happen, from a combination of extraordinary qualifications in the instructor, and uncommon excellence of disposition in the child ; but will any man undertake to say, that it is generally applicable, and are the interests of myriads to be sacrificed for the possible advantage of a very few individuals. Is a master to be allowed to change the accustomed system of instruction, because he thinks himself competent to effect what others have failed of accomplishing. Assuredly, the probability is, that the man who so thinks of himself, is under the influence of overweening vanity. It is not amongst men of superior qualifications and deep knowledge of the perversity of the human heart, and the difficulty of correcting its evil propensities, that such self confidence is to be found.

But after all these projects have been detailed, it is admitted by this writer, that other subordinate means must be sometimes employed ; and at the head of these subordinate means we find "corporal punishment." Truly, the children subjected to the discipline which admits corporal punishment, will not be apt to

class it among subordinate means. But "it is not to be resorted to in the first instance; remonstrance and admonitions, first private, then public, are to be employed." Now be it observed, that at the very outset of this new plan of education, the author had condemned the resorting to the feeling of shame and the dread of exposure, as punishments, lest it should lead to that fear of man which bringeth a snare. But

Naturam expelles furca, tamen usque recurret.

He finds himself at last compelled to resort to these very principles (17).

What comes next, if these means prove ineffectual?—"the child is to be deprived of the privileges which other children enjoy." Now here we have rewards and punishments; for the continuance of a privilege is a reward for the continuance of good behaviour, and must operate in such a way as to produce in the children those comparisons as to merit and demerit, which it was deemed evil to give occasion for; and their discontinuance is a direct punishment. The instance given of a privilege, the loss of which is to be made a punishment, is that of being allowed to borrow books from the library, which it is proposed to attach to the school. A truly curious mode of producing amendment in a child this certainly is, to deprive him of the power of reading books which might improve him!

Ultimately the child whom this discipline had failed to correct, is to "suffer corporal punishment at home, and in the presence of the teacher or superintendant." Why the admonition should be public, and the exclusion from privileges public, and this ultimate punishment inflicted in private, we are not told. There are some practical difficulties in this last process, which it would not be easy to get over. It may not be easy to convince the parents that such chastisement is necessary, and it cannot be expected, that they will refrain from inquiring into the cause of it. It may be still more difficult to persuade them to be present at its infliction. But besides all this, what is to become of the school while the teacher is absent on this business? What portion of his time will be occupied in going distances of two or three miles upon such errands? Is it to be expected, that in a numerous school, and we must give up education altogether if we are not content to have many children instructed by one master,—is it, I say, to be expected in a numerous school, that instances of such delinquency will be so very rare, as to admit the possibility of such a system of discipline?—Undoubtedly not.

We have done with punishment, come we now to rewards. And here also we find all the system which had been proposed, at once given

up. "The diligent and well conducted are to be recommended to the superintendant for gifts or privileges." "But these," we are told, "are to be given, not as bribes to urge them forward, but as rewards, to shew them that their good behaviour is observed, and duly esteemed." It is truly melancholy to see a well intentioned man thus deceiving himself into a belief, that he can change the nature of things, by bestowing new names upon them. He calls a premium *a bribe*, and rejects the use of it.—He denominates it *a reward*, and he adopts it. He seems to have some confused notion that it is useful to give a reward, but mischievous to promise it. Now in this he forgets, that to give to a child a reward for any good conduct, involves, practically, the promise to give similar rewards for future good conduct. The inference is one which the child will never fail to make; and the fact of such gift being known to other children in the school, they will inevitably be led to expect similar rewards for their good conduct. If the superintendant of the school does not act uniformly, the consequence will be, the loss of respect for him among the children, who will, at best, consider him as capricious, and most probably distrust him as partial.

Following this writer one step further, we find him adopting the actual system of pre-

miums proposed by the Association already mentioned: "the distribution of Bibles, Testaments, and other books which combine what is agreeable and interesting with what is improving and instructive." These he places at the head of his rewards. It is unnecessary for me to follow him any farther. He admits that general and periodical examinations may be expedient, but that they should be conducted with simplicity and so as to avoid vain display. Such are our examinations. He admits of giving Bibles and Testaments and improving books as rewards. Such are our premiums.

I cannot avoid observing, that he does not name *Prayer Books* among his rewards. Nay, he excludes them, for they certainly do not come under the description of books combining what is agreeable and interesting, with what is improving and instructive. And I make this remark to warn you, my Reverend Brethren, that there is a secret leaven of dissent, or at best, an indifference to our establishment, lurking in the minds of those proposers of new plans of education. And I cannot help noticing, that in the only place in this chapter of the tract I have been examining, in which the word *catechetical* occurs, it has a meaning totally different from its ordinary one,

the catechism of our Church not making any part of the instruction designated by the word.

I shall add a few remarks upon that letter in a late publication to which I have already referred. Besides repeating the usual objections to examinations, this letter accuses all of them, and particularly the catechetical examinations, of being so conducted as to produce, “pride, vain glory, hypocrisy, envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness.” The effect of the examinations in Dublin College, I have witnessed from a period long before the writer of that letter was born, and I hesitate not to say, that their general effect has been to encourage and strengthen the virtues directly opposed to these vices, which he charges upon them; and that the individuals in whose breasts the seeds of those vices existed, have been deterred from exhibiting them by the fear of that disapprobation with which they were certain of being visited. The distinction between *emulation*, which desires to raise itself by the full exercise of every power that has been bestowed upon it, and *envy*, which seeks only to depress its opponents, has no where been more strongly felt, no where have those dispositions met the rewards and punishments which they respectively deserve, more promptly, nor with more effect. The persons who conduct catechetical examinations,

have all of them been trained in that College, and accustomed to that system; that they manage the catechetical examinations so as to produce the evil effects of which this writer complains, I do not believe. As far as I have witnessed those examinations, and I did witness them upon a most extended scale for several years while resident in Dublin, and have continued to pay much attention to them since that period, I believe the effects were such as I have already stated them to be in College.

This writer acknowledges, that to abandon the system of examinations and premiums entirely and at once, might be impossible, and "that if it were possible, it would be very injurious for at least one generation." But he proposes to diminish what he thinks the evil of the plan, by increasing the number of premiums, and the expense he observes would be but little, "since the children do not regard so much the pecuniary value of the premium, as the possession of it," so that the rate of premiums might be made lower. Let me first observe, that we have here a complete answer to the objections of the other writer whom I noticed: "that the system of premium trained up the children in a principle of gross self interest." We have it here confessed, and certainly by no willing witness, that it produced

in them a generous spirit which disregarded the pecuniary value of the reward, and was governed by principles totally the reverse of gross self interest. Let me observe also, that the necessity of continuing the system for the present generation is conceded, which is all that we of the present generation are concerned with. And finally, let me call your attention to the fact, that in our ordinary practice, two premiums are given to every seven children, and one of them not dependent upon talents, but upon diligence and good conduct alone. And that though the other is the reward of talents combined with diligence and good conduct, yet where great merit does appear in a second candidate, there is always found some person to bestow upon him an additional reward. What this letter writer proposes to have done, is actually our practice.

But why should we pursue a system which may possibly lead to evil? The answer is obvious—Because it certainly leads to good that infinitely over balances that evil, good which cannot by any other means be attained.

And first as to the teachers. It gives to them, by bringing the children of various schools to be examined together, the mode in which those examinations ought always to be con-

ducted, an opportunity of seeing what other teachers are able to effect, and thus each has the advantage of the experience and abilities of every other, and the knowledge thus acquired is put in action by a sense of the duty which they owe to the children under their care, and by a regard for their own character, and for their own interest also, which is surely a justifiable motive for exertion.

Then as to the children, they have opportunities of perceiving their own deficiency, if such be the case, by a comparison with others, brought into competition with them from different schools. They see what others have done, and are thus taught what they themselves might have done. They are not apt to acknowledge any natural inferiority in themselves, and are ready to agree with their parents and their teachers, that had they been diligent, they would not have lost the reward for which they sought; the consequence certainly will be, increased diligence for the ensuing year. They see that such increase of diligence in the first year has been profitable to other children, who had formerly been in the same circumstances in which they then find themselves to be, and great indeed is the probability, that they will follow the successful example. All these advantages result from the system of exami-

nations, which I have described, and unworthy indeed must be the parents and the teachers, who neglect to make use of them. There is but one evil passion which can be excited, *envy*; and happily, that has no means of gratifying itself, placed within the power of the child, who might be so unfortunate as to feel it. He cannot stop the progress of the individual who has attained a superiority over him: the passion dies for want of food to keep it alive. Nay more, it is killed in its very birth by the consideration, that it is but a mere chance whether ever the individual who had been the object of it, will again be an opponent on a similar trial. When a great number of children are brought together from several schools, and separated into small divisions, it is probable, that the arrangements of each successive year will be different. The emotion of envy, if it ever should exist, will be immediately suppressed by the certainty that it is as impotent as it is criminal.

That the desire of obtaining the approbation of parents and teachers is laudable, the writers against whom I am contending, are willing to admit. They are indeed precluded from making any objection to the desire of growing in favour with man, unless the means of attaining that favour are displeasing in the

sight of God. And they will not venture to assert, that giving proof of knowledge of God's word is liable to that objection.

I have been led to discuss this subject with much greater prolixity, than I had expected when I commenced it. But, impressed as I am with the immense importance of carrying to the utmost extent these catechetical examinations, and encouraging by the most effectual means the children of the Established Church in their attendance upon them, I cannot think any efforts I may be able to make to engage your co-operation—your still increasing co-operation in promoting them, are misplaced, and I trust in God that they will not be unsuccessful.

One word more and I have done. The Sunday schools, happily so general, are of great utility, but they ought not to be deemed a substitute for regular catechetical instruction. To that the minister of each parish should pay the most particular attention. And I must add, that not only should he be very careful indeed in the selection of such persons as he admits to assist him, either in catechising or in his Sunday school, but that in every case, where the number of children is not too great to admit of it, such assistants should be limited to examin-

ing the children in that preliminary instruction which works in question and answer contain ; and if assistants are found, who will perfect their several classes in such useful books, they will have done as much as it may be advantageous, in general, to require. After a very few years, a clergyman will generally be able to find amongst young persons taught by himself, competent assistants for this purpose, or even for being intrusted with the higher classes, where the number is so great as to require it. Persons suspected of entertaining any peculiar opinions, should not be permitted to undertake even this subordinate duty ; they will, I know well what I say, find opportunities of infusing their opinions into the unsuspecting minds of those committed to their care, and even promises solemnly given to avoid the temptations to such conduct, cannot be relied upon.

And now, my Reverend Brethren, I shall conclude in the words of that solemn exhortation, which should be ever present to your remembrance, beseeching you, “ that you will consider the end of your ministry towards the children of God, and that you will never cease your labour, your care, and your diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such

as are committed to your charge unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and that perfectness in Christ, that there be no place left either for error in religion or for viciousness in life."

NOTES.

(1) Page 2. *The Association for discountenancing Vice and promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion*, was established in 1792. Reducing the price of three hundred and fifty Bibles, is an article of expenditure in its first account, ending in June 1794. In the next year we find the number to be upwards of five thousand.

(2) Page 2. *The Bible Society*, established in 1806. Had its members, instead of forming a separate society, united their strength with that already organized, the distribution of Bibles would have increased far beyond what the two societies have been able to effect acting separately. Nor was there any difficulty to impede such a proceeding. Dissenters were admissible into the Association, and such persons as chose to confine their subscriptions to the distribution of the Bible, might have done so by purchasing Bibles to their full amount. There never was any rule limiting the sale of Bibles at reduced prices to those who also purchased Prayer Books.

The contributions of persons not being members of the Association are also received, and corresponding privileges in purchasing Bibles at reduced prices granted.

(3) Page 3. See evidence of Mr. Donelan in the first Report of the Commissioners of Education Inquiry, page 489.

(4) Page 3. Bishop Milner in his evidence before the Committee of the House of Lords, March 21, 1825, p. 381, said, "That we have no aversion to the reading of the Bible, and the possession of it by the laity of our Church, is best proved by the great many editions it has gone through in Ireland, under our express sanction."

It should be observed, that I do not quote these words as a proof that the Roman Catholic Clergy are not averse from the circulation of the Scriptures among their laity, but merely as evidence, that they do not wish to appear averse from it, a fact which shews very evidently, that their laity are so desirous of reading them, as to make open opposition an exercise of authority not unlikely to provoke resistance.

(5) Page 3. It is a curious fact, that some of the translations of our Bible, which are condemned in this book of Ward's, have been lately adopted by the Roman Catholics.

Among the passages cited by Ward as instances of false translation, is Romans, c. 8. v. 18. "*Not worthy to be compared with the glory,*" instead of which the Rhemes version has, "*Not condign to the glory.*" The last edition of the Roman Catholic translation, published under the sanction of Bishop Murray, Titular Archbishop of Dublin, adopts the Protestant translation: "*Not worthy to be compared with the glory, &c.*"

Again, Hebrews 2. v. 9. The Rhemes version is, "*But him that was a little lessened under the angels, we see Jesus, because of the passion of death, crowned with glory and honour.*"

Our translation has it thus: "*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.*"

Ward concludes his censure upon this translation with the exclamation, "*Intolerable is their deceit!*" And Bishop Murray adopts verbatim the translation thus censured.

Yet further, 1 Ep. Pet. 1. v. 25. The Rhemes version is, "*And this is the word that is evangelized among you.*" Our translation is, "*And this is the word, which by the Gospel is preached unto you.*" Upon which Ward bestows the strong censure, "That the words, *by the Gospel*, are added deceitfully, and of ill intent, to make the simple reader think that there is no other word of God but the written word." A censure which bishop Murray appears not to have regarded, inasmuch as he has adopted, *verbatim*, our translation of this passage also, except the insignificant change of *is* for *hath*, which no ways affects the objection made by Ward.

This subject is treated fully in two valuable pamphlets by the Rev. George Hamilton, from which the preceding observations have been taken. Mr. Hamilton, it appears, was not in possession of the quarto Douay of 1816, in which, published under the sanction of the late Bishop Troy, I find our version of 1 Ep. Peter, c. 1. v. 25. and also of Heb. c. 2. v. 9, adopted in preference to that of Rhemes.

In addition to the variations from the original Rhemes version, which Mr. Hamilton has noticed in the publications to which I have referred, he has discovered, as I learn from a letter which I have received from him, two of great importance. St. Luke, c. 5. v. 32, "*I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance,*" is translated in Bishop Murray's edition, "*I came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance.*" And St. Luke, c. 17. v. 3, "*And if he do penance, forgive him,*" is translated in Bishop Troy's edition of 1810, "*And if he be penitent, forgive him.*" Both agreeing with our established translation.

(6) Page 5. No such objection is made by the Hindoos or by the Mahometans to the reading the Scriptures in the schools in the East Indies, of which there is an interesting account in *Bishop Heber's Journey in India*, vol. 1. p. 43, and vol. 2. pp. 177 and 301.

(7) Page 6. *August. de Fide et Operibus*, tom. 6. p. 177. *Edit. Benedic.*

(8) Page 9. *Calvin's Institutes*, p. 391.

(9) Page 9. *August. de Catechizandis Rudibus*, tom. 6. p. 263.

(10) Page 11. *Ibid*, p. 268.

(11) Page 11. It is happily unnecessary in Ireland to employ arguments to prove the importance of catechizing, or to urge motives to enforce its practice. Clergymen whose parishioners are careless in sending their children for instruction, will find the subject very ably treated in an essay under the title of *Horæ Catechetice*, by the Rev. W. S. Gilly, and in the Charge of the then Bishop of London, (now Archbishop of Canterbury,) to which Mr. Gilly refers, as having particularly contributed to excite his attention to the practice, the general disuse of which is lamented in the Charge, as calamitous in the highest degree to the interests of piety. Mr. Gilly appears entirely unacquainted with Ireland, for he "advises the Clergy in this country to practise catechizing upon a more extended scale!" p. 152.

The scale generally adopted will be best understood by stating the plan of annual catechetical examinations adopted very generally in Ireland, under the *Association for discountenancing Vice*, &c. already mentioned. The lowest class is examined in the Church Catechism and its explanation, and in some of the Collects, which they are not only required to re-

peat, but to explain, and support by reference to the Scriptures. In the next class, to this is added the Gospel of St. Luke. The next has, in lieu of St. Luke, the Gospel of St. Matthew and Mrs. Trimmer's Selections from the Old Testament to the end of Genesis. Those of the fourth year have the Gospels of St. Mark and St. John, the first 55 lessons of Mrs. Trimmer's Selections, and from the 110th to the end. And the highest class, still retaining the Catechism and explanation, with an increased number of Collects, has the whole of Mrs. Trimmer's Selections from the Old Testament, the Gospels and Acts, the Epistle to Titus, and the 13th 1 Ep. Cor.

This system is established nearly through every Diocese, nor is it to be understood, that in those parts where it has not been established catechetical instruction has been neglected. There is no Parish Minister who would not consider himself as disgraced by being suspected of inattention to it.

(12) Page 12. The word *emulation* is used in different senses, as is ζήλος which Suidas considers as properly a word of good import, ἀγαθὸν τινὸς ἐπιθυμία χωρίς φθόνου τινὸς ἐγγινώμενη τῇ ψυχῇ: though sometimes used in a bad sense, for *envious contention*. Παρεζήλων is certainly used in a good sense in the verse which I have quoted, and it bears exactly the same meaning in v. 11. of the same chapter, and in v. 19. of c. 10. where "*excite to emulation*" would be a better translation than ours of "*provoke to jealousy*." Hence it follows, that to excite emulation is not naturally productive of evil.

(13) Page 12. In a tract entitled *Hints for Sunday Schools*: see particularly chapter on Rewards and Punishments. This tract is much praised by a writer in the *Christian Examiner for July, 1828*.

(14) Page 17. This refers to the practice of Dublin College, in which there are four public examinations of the

TO
THE PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS,
AND COMMITTEE,
OF THE
INCORPORATED SOCIETY
FOR PROMOTING THE ENLARGEMENT AND BUILDING OF
CHURCHES AND CHAPELS,
UNDER THE PATRONAGE
OF HIS MAJESTY, THE KING;
THE FOLLOWING SERMON
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY A WELL-WISHER
TO THEIR LABOUR OF LOVE,
GEORGE FEACHEM.

DORKING,
October 28, 1828.

A SERMON.

LUKE VII, 5.

FOR HE LOVETH OUR NATION, AND HE HATH
BUILT US A SYNAGOGUE.

To this generous conduct of a Roman centurion may be applied the words of our Saviour concerning the woman, who poured an alabaster-box of very precious ointment on his head, as he sat at meat: "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this CENTURION hath done, be told for a memorial of HIM." This centurion built a synagogue at once to God and to fame. His servant, who was dear unto him, being sick, and ready to die, he sent unto Jesus the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. Accordingly, they came to Jesus, and besought him earnestly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: FOR HE LOVETH OUR NATION, AND HE

HATH BUILT US A SYNAGOGUE. The same feeling of affection, which he cherished towards his servant, had expanded into a general love for those strangers, among whom he sojourned. During his residence at Capernaum, he had doubtless discovered the infinite superiority of the Jewish religion over the senseless idolatry prevalent in imperial Rome; and so preferred the simplicity of worshipping THE ONE JEHOVAH to the grossness of polytheism, that he testified his approbation by building a synagogue at his own charge. We cannot but much admire the grateful intercession of the Jewish elders in his behalf. The worthiness, which they so candidly acknowledged in him, he could not perceive: "I am not *worthy* that thou shouldest enter under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself *worthy* to come unto thee." The ready subjection, which he rendered to his superiors, he was accustomed to exact from those under his own authority; and he commissioned certain friends to mention his firm conviction, that with the same instantaneous promptitude, which soldiers shew in obeying a military word of command, at a powerful word from Jesus his servant should be healed. Such was the condescension, the tenderness, the humility,

the philanthropy, the munificence, the piety,—in one word, the WORTHINESS, of this Roman centurion; and such was the sound sense of his personal argument, that “Jesus marvelled at him—what an incomparable honour!—and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you—what an indelible rebuke!—I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” The faith of the master was immediately rewarded by the recovery of the servant.

Let this beautiful and interesting passage of evangelical history serve as no unsuitable introduction to the subject of this day’s discourse; which is expressly commanded to be an **EFFECTUAL EXCITEMENT** to a liberal contribution for aiding the Enlargement, Building, Rebuilding, and Repairing of Churches and Chapels in England and Wales.

On Mount Sinai God ordered Moses to receive contributions for his tabernacle. “Speak now unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man, that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take my offering: and let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” On Mount Zion God collected by the hands of David

contributions for a temple, that he might have a fixed residence. "Thou hast received gifts *amongst* men, that the Lord God might be lodged."—"Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy. Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. O Lord our God, all this store, that we have prepared to BUILD THEE AN HOUSE for thy holy name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee." Although the eternal and incomprehensible majesty of God, the Lord of heaven and earth, whose seat is heaven, and the earth his footstool, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; yet the material church or temple is a place appointed for the assemblies of God's people. Solomon built unto the Lord the most glorious temple ever made; "exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries." It appears, however, that

in subsequent reigns, through the negligence and ungodliness of such as had the charge of it, it fell sometimes into decay. When godly kings and governors were in authority, then commandment was immediately given, that the temple of God should be repaired, and the oblations of the people gathered for the repair. We read in the second book of **KINGS**, that, under the guidance of Jehoiada the priest, who took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, **JEHOASH** commanded the priests to deliver all the money, that came into any man's heart to bring, for the breaches of the house. **JOSIAH** also gave commandment to Hilkiah the priest concerning the repair of God's temple, with the "silver, which the keepers of the door gathered of the people."

It hath pleased Almighty God, that these histories should be written at large for the instruction of all ages. Our own **KING** at this time is willing to consecrate the voluntary gifts of the people in a similar manner. The paramount importance of religion to the permanent peace and prosperity of the state, as well as to the salvation of each individual; and the consequent expediency of social worship for the preservation of it, are admitted by every dispassionate friend

to truth, every consistent believer in divine revelation. The Ministers of the Gospel, therefore, are very properly required in their respective spheres to promote the pious and patriotic purpose of the King. Better arguments cannot be urged, than those in our HOMILY *for repairing the church*; affording a specimen of godly and wholesome doctrine and exhortations, provided by the venerable REFORMERS for the edification of our forefathers and their posterity from generation to generation.

Churches were built among Christian people on this great consideration, that there THE WHOLE multitude in every parish should hear the blessed word, and learn the will of the everlasting God; should with one voice and heart invoke, magnify, and praise the name of God; should return earnest thanks to our heavenly Father for his heap of benefits, daily and hourly poured upon us; that there the sacraments, which our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus hath ordained, should be duly, reverently, and decently administered. To these godly uses were churches dedicated, and wholly exempted from worldly uses. They therefore, who have *little* mind or devotion to repair and build God's temple, are to be accounted people of

much ungodliness, undervaluing good order in Christ's church, and the true honour of God ; with evil examples offending and hindering their well-disposed neighbours. They, who think it but a matter of indifference to see their church in ruin, sin against God and his holy congregation.

God was grieved with his people and plagued them, according to the prophet HAGGAI, because they built and adorned their own houses, and suffered his holy house to continue in uncomely dilapidation. Thus saith the Lord, "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and the Lord's house lie waste? Ye have sown much, and bring in little ; ye eat, but ye have not enough ; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink ; ye clothe you, but there is none warm ; and he, that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes." By these and other plagues, which God for this cause inflicted upon his people, it may evidently appear, that God will have the place of public assembly for divine worship well maintained.

Some, neither regarding godliness, nor the place of godly exercise, will say, that the temple under the law was commanded, because it had great promises annexed to it ; because it was a

figure or signification of Christ and his church. But our churches are not destitute of promises. Our Saviour Christ saith, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Any number therefore coming to church together in the name of Christ, have their God and Saviour present by his grace, according to his most comfortable promise. Why then ought not Christian people to build them churches, having as great promises of the presence of God, as Solomon had for the temple? Solomon's temple was a figure of Christ. But we know, that now in the time of the clear light of Christ Jesus, the Son of God, all shadows, figures, and significations are utterly gone, all vain and unprofitable ceremonies are absolutely annihilated. If then it had not been sin and shame to neglect the rebuilding of his temple, God would not have been so much grieved, and so soon have plagued his people, because they built and decorated their own houses so gorgeously, and despised the house of God, their Lord.

In many places of this country it is lamentable to behold the ruinous state of churches. If a man's dwelling-house be decayed, he will never cease, till it be restored; if his barn,

where he bestows all his fruits and his goods, be out of repair, what diligence doth he use to make it perfect? If the stable for his horse, or the sty for his swine, be not able to exclude severity of weather, when the rains fall, and the winds blow, how careful is he to incur the necessary cost? Shall we then be so mindful of our common houses, deputed to such low occupations, and be forgetful toward that house of God, in which are expounded the words of our eternal salvation; in which are administered the sacraments and mysteries of our redemption? The fountain of our regeneration in baptism is there presented to us; the participation of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ is there offered to us. Shall we not esteem the place, where so heavenly things are handled? Wherefore, if we have any reverence to the service of God, if we have any common honesty, if we have any conscience in observing solemn ordinances, let us cheerfully contribute our offerings to keep the national churches in good repair. Thus we shall not only please God, and deserve in some degree his manifold blessings, but also deserve the good report of all godly people.

When the church is well furnished with places convenient for all classes, the people are more

desirous to resort thither, and the more comforted during the whole time of service. Wherefore, dearly beloved in Christ Jesus, ye who rejoice to see the glory of God truly set forth, render your most hearty thanks to the goodness of Almighty God, who hath stirred up in these our days the wills not only of his preachers and ministers, but also of his faithful and Christian magistrates and governors to effect such alterations and amendments, as the circumstances of our country demand.

The progressive increase of population, happily undiminished by war or epidemical disease, naturally suggested to the minds of our rulers and ecclesiastical guardians the necessity of enlarging the present churches, and adding to the number of sacred edifices. Ten years have elapsed, since many devout members of our communion instituted a Society to carry into execution this praiseworthy plan; and munificent subscriptions have enabled them to supply the spiritual wants of some most populous districts. Parliament also at the same time with admirable wisdom assigned one million of money, and afterwards half a million more, to the sole use of building Churches; sanctifying the many millions expended in war by a splendid tribute to

the Prince of Peace. Four-fifths of these donations are already consumed ; and the remainder awaits the fulfilment of promises to numerous applications ; so that, with every prudence of management, the whole is exhausted. Is it in vain to expect a repetition of parliamentary succour ? By what more efficacious measure, than that of preaching the gospel to rich and poor, when they meet together in the house of the Lord, who is Maker of them all, can the blessing of heaven be secured to our Protestant constitution ? The small sums obtained by briefs were almost, if not altogether, absorbed in official fees ; and therefore briefs, however wise in their original formation, justly becoming unpopular through the well-known misapplication of such collections, are now wisely abolished. Henceforth the total sums, to whatever amount, will be immediately transmitted to the Incorporated Society, and exclusively devoted to the specific objects professedly in view. How often this mode of subsidiary largesses will be put in action, must depend partly on the productiveness of the present appeal to the public generosity, and partly on the exigencies, greater or less, of the several cases, which will require proportionable grants. No certain period of recur-

rence is intimated. If, for instance, an annual or a triennial circular, like the present, were intended to be issued, such intention would have been plainly announced. But as nothing is known on this point, so nothing is expressed.

Our own diocese has hitherto received its full share of assistance. Thirty-two cases have been aided by the sum of 6,230*l*. Hence 9,019 additional sittings have been procured, of which 6,731 are to be free and unappropriated. Thus excuses are cut off from many, who may have wished and sought excuse, for excommunicating themselves from the church and fellowship of the saints of God ; while accommodation is afforded to many, who used to hunger and thirst after the word of life, as dispensed in her pure and orthodox ritual.

The edifice, in which we are now assembled, was probably erected about the commencement of the twelfth century ; and consequently, it has withstood the various vicissitudes of the seasons for the space of seven hundred years. The crumbling walls may be almost said to totter under the massive roof. The frequent expenditure on unavoidable repairs is very considerable. From actual admeasurement it is ascertained to be capable of containing only

one-fifth of the inhabitants. Let us hope, that the time may shortly arrive, when the opulent owners of houses and lands in this parish, catching the noble spirit of the Roman centurion, shall exhibit this substantial proof of Christian LOVE towards their neighbours, and BUILD US A CHURCH. Let the laudable, glorious, and honourable competition arise, Which of them shall be foremost in this excellent work? If now, or at the next decennial census, our population should allow us to advance a claim on the Society's funds, such claim might be graciously relinquished for the benefit of parishes less wealthy, and in equal or greater need of church accommodation. Our lot is cast in a pleasant place. Let us manifest our thankfulness to the Giver of every good gift by a structure dedicated to his service, corresponding with the magnificence of private mansions, and the natural beauties of local scenery. Another favourable circumstance remains to be noticed. This pious work would proceed under the auspices of an exemplary Prelate. Newly translated to this distinguished diocese, a fair field is presented, inviting him to display the ministerial character of a Christian Bishop, in all its diversified and arduous duties. His activity is commensurate

with his ability ; and most unquestionably every encouragement will be extended by him to the prosecution of such undertakings, as the Royal Letter recommends. Let some portion then of the fervent zeal, which animated the Royal Psalmist, animate those before me. "Lord, remember David, and all his trouble," all his anxiety, and care ; "how he swore unto the Lord, and vowed a vow unto the Almighty God of Jacob ; I will not come within the tabernacle of mine house, nor climb up into my bed ; I will not suffer mine eyes to sleep, nor mine eye-lids to slumber, neither the temples of my head to take any rest, until I find out a place for the temple of the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."

On the present occasion, my brethren, be liberal according to the magnitude of the call. Bind yourselves every man and woman to your power. In the joyful days of health, the remembrance of one good deed gives greater gratification to the soul, a more solid satisfaction, than to reflect on a thousand parties of pleasure. In the hour of sickness, nothing can sustain the sinking spirits, but the consciousness of having always used the world, as not abusing it. Hold forth then helping hands, and support

with well-timed bounty the established Church of England. Support it against every opposition, innovation, encroachment, and calumny. Not loud and vaunting declaimers about *liberal principles* both in politics and religion, who embroil public affairs : but “able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness ;” statesmen in council, judges on the bench, answering to these high qualities ; ALL, who endeavour in their proper vocations to *emancipate* the human mind from the shackles of ignorance and doubt, and to eradicate vice from the heart ; who seek not their own, but the general good ; are genuine patriots, citizens of the world, and best friends of their species. Brethren, as disciples of Jesus Christ, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; work out the salvation of others with alacrity and confidence : by converting the sinner from the error of his way ; by praying that the word of the Lord may have free course ; by BUILDING TEMPLES to his Divine Majesty ; by reverencing his sanctuaries ; by hallowing his sabbaths ; by letting your light so shine before men, that they may SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

THE END.

PRINTED BY A. J. VALPY, RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

A
S E R M O N,
&c.

v. N.Y. 1828.

PHILOSOPHY, UNENLIGHTENED BY DIVINE TRUTH,
A VAIN DECEIT.

3

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

CHURCH OF ASHFORD, IN KENT,

ON MONDAY, AUGUST 20, 1827,

AT THE

VISITATION

OF HIS GRACE THE

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

BY SAMUEL HOLLAND, M.D.

PRECENTOR OF CHICHESTER,

RECTOR OF WAREHORN,

AND CHAPLAIN TO HIS HONOUR THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. & J. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, AND WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL.

1828.



Printed by R. GILBERT, St. John's Square, London.

TO THE MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,
CHARLES,
BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE,
LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,
PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND, AND METROPOLITAN,

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE,
DELIVERED AT HIS GRACE'S
VISITATION
OF THE
DEANERIES OF CHARING AND LYMNE,

IS,
WITH SENTIMENTS OF PROFOUND RESPECT,

INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

CHAUNTRY, CHICHESTER,
Aug. 21, 1827.

VISITATION SERMON.

COLOSS. ii. 8.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

To console and to encourage, to confirm and to strengthen in the true faith, the Christian Converts at Colosse, was the purport of the Apostle in this his affectionate Epistle. He thanks God for the sincerity and fruitfulness of their faith. He prays for them without ceasing, *that they may be filled with the knowledge of the Divine Will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding* *. He then declares that Christ Jesus, into whose kingdom they had been translated on their conversion, is *the image of the Invisible God* †, *the Creator of every thing in*

* Col. i. 9.

† Col. i. 15.

heaven and in earth, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers *; that he is *the Head of the body, the Church* †. and that it had pleased the Father that in Him should *dwell all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*; by Him, *to reconcile all things to himself* ‡. He proceeds to shew that their reconciliation had been effected by the death of the Son of God: and that the converts whom he was addressing would not fail of inheriting the privileges thus obtained for them, *if they continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel* ||; and then announcing that they would hazard the loss of their Christian privileges, if they should suffer themselves to be *beguiled* from the profession of the faith *by enticing words* §, he warns them, in the earnest language of the text—*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ* **,.

To what Heresy (or rather Heresies, for the

* Col. i. 16.

† Col. i. 20.

§ Col. ii. 4.

† Col. i. 18.

|| Col. i. 23.

** Col. ii. 8.

words imply as much,) St. Paul considered his Colossian converts more particularly exposed, it may not import us at present to inquire. It is supposed to have been principally the heresy of the Gnostics, a sect of philosophers much opposed to the purity of Christian doctrine; mixing with Judaical observances the worldly maxims of Heathenism. Its professors, learned and subtle, were men of great pretence and promise: but being despisers of the simplicity of Gospel truth, failed those who sought from them true Christian instruction. St. Peter compares them to *wells without water*; inviting the thirsty pilgrim of the Desert, only to disappoint him: to *clouds*, which for a time seem ready to refresh the arid land, but in the hour of greatest need are *carried away by the tempest* *.

Whatever might be the heresy to which St. Paul alluded, the warning can never want an application. There never was a period in the history of the Christian Church when its faithful members were not exposed to the dangers, against which the Colossians are here pre-

* 2 Peter ii. 17.

monished :—when doctrines, vain and deceitful, under the *enticing* name of *philosophy*, did not threaten to *spoil* them (a term of extensive power*)—to carry them away captive, and strip them of their Christian principles and hopes : substituting the maxims of human learning and worldly wisdom for the pure, and spiritual, and heavenly precepts of the Gospel of Christ.

To the doctrines of a Gospel, which humiliates in order to exalt ; which begins by *pulling down the strong holds* of error, in order to lay a sure foundation for truth ; which must first *cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God*, before it can open a way for the free entrance of divine instruction ; which must *bring every thought* of the heart *into captivity*, before it can bend the stubborn will *to the obedience of Christ* ; there ever was, there ever will be, a spirit of opposition in the human breast. In the first age of Christianity this spirit assumed the imposing name of philosophy,

* Βλέπετε, μή τις ὑμᾶς ἔσται ὁ συλαγωγῶν. Tanquam prædam abducens. De militibus usurpatur, qui prædam agunt, et captivos in servitutem redigunt et abducunt. *Schleusneri Lexicon.*

a proud title, well calculated to strike with awe the unlearned and humble disciple of a crucified Master. In this our day when, by the happy improvement in the system of education, knowledge has become almost suddenly, as it were, diffused among mankind, to an extent hitherto unknown ; the same spirit is at work, if under less assuming pretensions, with no less dangerous influence. If it do not, like the philosophy of the Freethinker, attack religion in open day, it is covertly undermining its foundation. Manifesting itself in less direct efforts, it has scarcely yet obtained an acknowledged title ; but begins to assume that of *Liberality* : and under this specious name wins its way into the heart and best affections of the young, the inexperienced, and the unsuspecting. Nothing indeed can be more amiable and attractive than genuine liberality of mind : when it is indicated by an enlightened freedom from long cherished errors ; by a sacrifice of deep-rooted prepossessions to enlarged principles of sound reason ; and by a wish to allow and to cherish the same freedom in others : when it seeks truth for the sake of truth ; and seeks it by the pure light of knowledge, and under the guidance of a free un-

biased judgment: but if it go further; if it assume a right to sit in judgment on Scriptural truth; to scan the attributes and purposes of God, by the fallacious rule of human opinion, rather than by the clear revelation of His word and will; if it disparage His sacraments, and derogate from His everlasting ordinances: it is, whether it take the name of philosophy or liberality, in either and in both cases, falsely so called.

Fixed, as our several ministrations wisely are, my reverend brethren, to an assigned district, small perhaps in itself, but amply sufficient for the entire occupation of the faithful pastor of his flock; and satisfied as we must be, that our duties are best fulfilled within the appointed limit, we cannot, even in our retirements, be ignorant that amidst the great changes which have of late years taken place, and are taking place in the secular concerns of the world, the spirit of which I have been speaking, has begun to speculate upon Religion; and to hold a language calculated to check our pastoral exertions, and to put to hazard our ministerial usefulness. It will not therefore, I trust, be foreign at least to one of the purposes of our present meeting, if

I take occasion to advert to a few points in which this liberal, or rather latitudinarian spirit shews itself: and at the same time briefly notice some of those duties, which the cause of Christian truth appears to me (I say it with all due deference,) more especially to demand of us, under the present circumstances of the world.

There are not wanting, even among persons of great acuteness of intellect, and of highly cultivated powers of ratiocination, men who professing themselves the zealous friends of what is called general education, yet with the pretext of an enlarged liberality of spirit, and under the plea of forbearing to prejudice the infant mind, seem to consider the fundamental doctrines of Christianity an unnecessary part of elementary instruction. Give to the young scholar, they say, in the years of his mind's greatest susceptibility, the rudiments of art, and the elements of science: art is of no sect, and science of no party: but withhold the dogmas of religion, until the judgment shall have become mature; and then let his own discretion guide him in the choice of his creed: then let him determine for himself, what

mysteries are entitled to his belief; and what duties are worthy of his practice.—And is this the recommendation of the philosopher? Is this the suggestion of genuine liberality? How inconsistent with the plainest dictates of man's vaunted reason! How utterly at variance with all that we know of God's dealings with, and positive injunctions to, his creatures!

Can the heart exist from infancy to manhood wholly devoid of religious prepossessions? If the true seed be not early sown, will the soil continue entirely unproductive? If the "householder" delay to sow his wheat, will the ever vigilant enemy within the breast, who during the sleep of the intellect, is fain to scatter his tares among the wheat, abstain altogether from entering upon the fallow ground? Will art and science forbear to occupy the mind, to which religion is yet a stranger, with self-sufficiency and pride? Discourage devotional feelings in the young by withholding religious instruction: and will not prejudices of the darkest kind, and passions of a fearful malignity take possession of the unhallowed temple, and become the idols of their heart?

Knowing whereof we are made, our heavenly

Father delayed not at the creation to breathe into our souls his best gift, the principle of religion ; and anticipating our spiritual wants, to cherish it by every external aid. He made the Sabbath for man, even before actual sin had been committed. No sooner had man fallen by disobedience, than in the midst of judgment remembering mercy, he instituted the mystery of sacrifice : and thereby, in a manner inconceivable by the limited faculties of finite beings, made the penalty of sin, promptly and duly paid by the repentant sinner, the means under grace of his pardon and reconciliation : thus nurturing mankind, (long before the final purpose of the rite was declared) for the pre-determined deliverance, which was in due time to be accomplished.

Throughout the whole course, indeed, of the Mosaic dispensation, the world was in a state of education for *the faith which was afterwards to be revealed*. The Law in its ordinances, and in its requirements, in its threats, and in its promises, was *our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ* *.

* Galat. iii. 23, 24.

The faith for which the Law prepared mankind, has been revealed for the benefit of all. Freely we have received; let us freely give. As Christians it is our privilege, as ministers it is our duty, to proclaim to all the Gospel of pardon and peace: a duty which, though we may be accused of a wish to instil religious prejudice into the minds of youth, we dare not to forego, for the sake of the praise of liberal feelings. It is our duty to take especial care that all, who are consigned to our charge, be imbued at the earliest possible age, with true Christian doctrine. Not to dwell upon its importance to them in the present world, that they may fill their appointed stations with glory to their Maker, with benefit, or rather without injury to their fellow-creatures, and with peace and comfort to themselves: it is our province more particularly in the exercise of this duty, to contemplate them as heirs of immortality—to exhort, and comfort, and charge every one of them as a father doth his children—that they would walk worthy of God, who hath called them, as he hath called us all, unto his kingdom and glory *. Shall we train the frail

* 1 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

body for the few years of its feverish existence upon earth? Shall we educate the perishable mind for its short-lived occupation in the business of a vain world? and leave the undying soul without its proper knowledge? Shall we withhold for any period this knowledge from those who may at any hour be called, whether prepared or unprepared, to enter upon their higher state of being? Was it not the wisest of men, the inspired architect of the first temple, who, possessed of the most extensive earthly knowledge, discovered and deplored its vanity: who yet strongly averred, *that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good* *. Was it not his earnest injunction to *train up a child in the way he should go*, as the most sure if not the only means of keeping him in the right path, *that when he is old, he may not depart from it* †. How sedulously attentive to this duty were the chosen people of God? chosen indeed for this purpose, that amidst a dark, degenerate, and idolatrous world, they might preserve and manifest the pure light of religion in themselves, and in their families.

* Prov. xix. 2.

† Prov. xxii. 6.

This they taught, every father in his own family; the rabbin in the temple, the synagogue, and the academy. He who *established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, commanded*, says David, *our fathers, that they should make them known to their children. That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children* *. Abraham in particular had been specially and preternaturally favoured, because God *knew that he would command his children and his household after him; and that they should keep the way of the Lord* †; not their own way, according to the light of their own unaided judgment, but *the way of the Lord*, according to the revelation they would receive of the divine will. St. Paul commends Timothy and augurs favourably of his future usefulness in teaching the Gospel, because *from a child he had known the holy Scriptures*, not merely garbled extracts from the book of Revelation, selected with an undue tenderness to existing errors, and as an unworthy compromise among

* Psalm lxxviii. 5, 6.

† Gen. xviii. 19.

the holders of differing creeds; not only the moral precepts, but those fundamental principles of religion, those mysteries of godliness which were alone *able to make him wise*; and that not merely theoretically, but practically wise, wise *unto salvation* *. It is the glory also of our reformed Church, that those holy men, to whose wisdom and liberality, to whose labours and courage we owe the opening of the volume of inspiration to the unlearned, while they were contending against the defenders of Popish errors, with a zeal, a manliness, and a varied erudition, which will ever entitle their names to our respect and reverence, condescended from the higher exercise of their faculties to compose Catechisms for infant minds. And surely, surely in no limited sense did the founder himself of Christianity command his disciples, with a mild reproof of their unwillingness in this respect, to *suffer little children, and to forbid them not, to come unto him* †. Should there be any one present who, blinded by the specious liberality of modern philosophy, has ever in sincerity doubted the expedience of the

* 2 Tim. iii. 15.

† Matt. xix. 14.

initiation of infants into the Church of Christ, and of their early instruction in the principles of the Gospel, (although at first they must promise by sureties, and for a few years receive divine truths on authority,) I would intreat him to meditate on the impressive and affecting solemnity which he has just witnessed in this holy house. Had the fundamental truths of our religion been withholden from these our young Christian brethren, until they might have reached the undefined and indefinable period of maturity of judgment; instead of thronging, as we have seen them, the courts of the Lord's house to ratify and confirm their baptismal vows, few probably would ever have entered these sacred walls! for few would have been aware of the high privilege of membership with Christ in his Church. They would have been left unarmed for the conflict with the world, unwarned even of their danger from its pomps, its vanity, and its sinful lusts.

It is difficult to conceive, that a due sense of moral obligation could at any time be entertained by persons, unenlightened by the truths of religion: and history attests that virtue has ever been influenced in its extent and purity,

by the extent and purity of religious knowledge. The ethics of Heathen philosophy derived, indeed, all that was valuable in them from the unacknowledged, perhaps unsuspected, source of the Jewish Scriptures. Yet was this light, pure in its origin, so dimmed and discoloured by the medium through which it passed, the pride of philosophy and the prejudices of the passions, that it was found insufficient for the regulation of human conduct. In one of the proudest eras of civilization and refinement, illuminated as the world had lately been by Socrates, by Plato, by Xenophon, by Cicero; how humiliating a record of the moral condition of mankind, is contained in the Epistle of St. Paul to the inhabitants of imperial Rome. The Gentiles, indeed, *held the truth*, as exhibited in what is not very correctly denominated the law of nature, but they held it *in unrighteousness*. By the general light which was in the world, and by contemplating the order and beauty of creation, they *knew God*, yet through ignorance of his nature and attributes, they *glorified him not as God*. *They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. They changed the*

truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Well, therefore, might the wisest of Heathen philosophers aspire after a clearer revelation from heaven. And, praised be God! that clearer revelation has been in mercy vouchsafed to the world. The long-expected, and ardently anticipated day-spring from on high, hath visited us. So general has been the diffusion of its light, that religion, now mixing insensibly with every code of law, with every system of morality, purifies, strengthens, and hallows all their enactments. A morality unknown to the ablest, and the best of Heathen philosophers, has been brought to us from heaven. The Son of God himself has taken our nature upon him, to preach and to exemplify it, before he submitted to the pre-ordained sacrifice of himself for the redemption of mankind. *Many prophets and righteous men truly had desired to see those things which we have seen, and had not seen them; and to hear the things which we have heard, and had not heard them**. And is it, then, for us, so highly favoured

* Matt. xiii. 17.

above the prophets and righteous men of old; to disregard all that Christ hath taught; and, in contempt of all that he hath enjoined, to abandon any the least of those for whom he has prepared the spiritual riches of the Gospel, to the *weak and beggarly elements* of Heathen philosophy? Shall we leave them to *hew out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns which can hold no water*, when we have in his word a perpetual *fountain of living waters* *? Forbid it, Reason! forbid it, Justice! forbid it, Christian Charity!

Great, indeed, will be the condemnation of those who, now that the glorious light is come into the world, shut their eyes against it; and because of the evil of their deeds, love the darkness of Heathenism, rather than the light of Christianity. But still greater our condemnation, if, rejoicing ourselves in its beam, we neglect to impart it to others. Not to impart it when in our power, is, in effect, to intercept the light of heaven. Not to enforce Christian doctrine, as the basis, the measure, and the test of all moral virtue; is to proscribe Christianity,

* Jer. ii. 13.

and to dishonour its Divine Author. It is, we may almost say, to *tread under foot the Son of God* ; it is to *count the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing* ; it is to *do despite unto the spirit of Grace* *.

Let us ever bear in mind, that the duties of Christians are founded on the peculiar doctrines of the Christian faith ; that, therefore, it would be equally vain and unphilosophical, as well as unchristian, in this day to attempt to build up Christian virtues on any other foundation, than that which is laid in Scripture, the revealed nature and attributes of God, and the total incompetence of man to attain to any degree of moral purity, unassisted by divine grace. Before the promulgation of the Gospel, where was to be found that virtue, which is the foundation of almost every other, Humility ? It had not, in the Heathen code of morals, even a name ; and that which we have borrowed to express this Christian grace, was to the Romans, and all who spoke their language, a term of reproach or contempt. In what system of Heathen ethics do we discover that “bond of

* Heb. x. 29.

peace and of all virtue," Charity, in the universality of its Christian sense? And how can true humility be taught in the present day, but by pointing to the incarnation, the abasement, and the Cross of Christ: the Cross endured, the shame despised, by Him who came down from heaven, a voluntary exile from its glories? How shall we hope to check in ourselves or others, the guilty propensities of our fallen nature, but by dwelling on the omnipotence and omnipresence, on the purity, the truth, and the justice of God? Where can genuine philanthropy meet with an exemplar, but in Him who enjoined us to love one another, as He has loved us?—if it be not possible in the same degree, and to the same extent, yet after the model of his disinterested, enduring, everlasting love?

Nor do our duties towards the young end with having provided that their education be formed on the pure doctrines of the Gospel. Though we shall thereby have most surely laid the foundation of their strict and satisfied adherence to the Church, into whose pale they have had the unspeakable benefit of being admitted; we have in their advance to manhood,

and in their future journey through life, much to contend against, which, without our vigilance, might shake their allegiance to it. The passions under indulgence may overmaster their reason, and persuade them that Institutions, though of a sacred character, are infringements on natural liberty : or the liberal laxity of religious principle represent to them that Creeds are matters of indifference. It is our paramount duty to represent, and strongly to enforce, not only the claims of our National Church, but their privileges, in having been admitted into membership with it : to shew to them, that it was for the conservation of the truths of Christianity, in their pristine purity, that the Author and Finisher of our faith established His Church upon earth : that, as under the first dispensation, God, in condescension to the limited faculties, and in compassion to the infirmities of His creatures, had aided their conception of spiritual truth by addresses to the senses, by rites and ceremonies, types and figures : so the Founder of the Christian Church had continued the ordinances of the Jewish temple, with the exception of that, which having existed only as a type of the sacrifice He had

made in His own person, was no longer necessary or significant. And that for the propagation of these spiritual truths, and for the perpetuation of these holy ordinances, as the continued means of grace to mankind, He appointed ministers to be the *stewards of the mysteries of God* *. Moreover, it is required in *stewards, that a man be found faithful*. But we cannot be true ministers of Christ, we cannot be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God, if, through fear of man's judgment, we do not on every possible occasion uphold the cause of His Church, and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine all gainsayers, to respect and reverence ordinances so suited to the nature of man ; so mercifully enjoined by his Creator and Redeemer. Painful it is for us, my Reverend Brethren, to incur the charge of a sordid regard to our own interest, to bear the scoffs of the ignorant, and the scorn of the free-thinker ; but we have entered upon a service which requires us to endure all these, and much more, rather than lose from our folds any one, even the least of those over whom *the Holy Ghost has made*

* 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

us overseers *. We do not dispute the right, conscientiously exercised, of any one to choose his own teachers ; but, in the much-injured name of philosophy, as well as in that of religion, we beg him to consider that it is a right which cannot be exercised without imminent hazard to his own progress in religious knowledge ; without a subversion of the natural relation between the teacher and the learner. To be chosen, derogates from the authority which is necessary to the teacher, in order to command attention, and to give force and efficiency to his instructions. To choose his own instructor, presupposes in the learner a want of that humble docility which fits the mind for the reception of truth. It may be called a right of free judgment, a liberty of the mind ; but does it not arise from prepossessions too headstrong to bear the guidance or control of reason. Does it not deceive itself, and seek to be deceived ? Does it not *say to the seers, See not, and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits* †. Though it may

* Acts xx. 28.

† Isaiah xxx. 10.

not go the length of that rebellion against God, which according to the Evangelical prophet proceeds to say to the uncompromising preacher, *Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the holy one of Israel to cease from before us*: the fatal result too often is, that thus prejudice becomes inveterate; and error on the most solemn of all subjects, is perpetuated. To what other cause can we, in this period of general advancement of the intellectual powers, ascribe the continuance of most of the various heresies and divisions which not only dismember the Church, but afflict and degrade mankind? those “erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God’s word,” which still require the incessant vigilance of the clergy, “with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away *.” To what other source can we attribute the prevalence, in persons often of strict piety, of that unhappy error, which forms its gloomy creed, and derives its startling maxims, and exclusionary speculations on the mercies of God, from insulated passages of Holy Writ, irreconcilable, while disjointed from the

* The Ordering of Priests.

context, with the general analogy of faith? To what other cause, the continuance, even among men of much moral worth, of the proud, yet soul-enslaving heresy of those who deny the Divinity of the Redeemer? who heap to themselves teachers, and concede to them the right of altering and even mutilating the received version of the word of God, under the bold pretence of improving it? who rob the Saviour of his glory, and themselves, if not of the name of Christians, of all the brightest hopes, of all the best and purest consolations of the Christian faith.

If this be "philosophy," it bears too strong a resemblance to that of the Chaldeans, so awfully denounced by the Prophet just referred to. *Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me. May God avert the threatened vengeance!—Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: And desolation shall come upon thee suddenly; which thou shalt not know*.*

* Isaiah xlvii. 10, 11.

That this presumptuous self-confidence may not lead unlearned and unstable persons to such future results, it is our duty to proclaim, with frequency and earnestness, the danger, and, what it may in many instances be called, the sin of Schism.

It is even asserted, by the votaries of this latitudinarian principle, that God is pleased with diversity of Creeds, is gratified by variety in the worship of his creatures. But if truth be uniform, all variation from it must be error. Now error, the unintentional error of the sincere worshipper, may be pardoned by the God of mercy, but can never be acceptable to the God of truth. Conscience may lead any man away from his appointed teacher, and from the Church into which he was admitted at his baptism, and he may attach himself to other communions with perfect sincerity of mind; but has he, before he separated himself, duly used all the means of grace afforded to him? has he deeply studied the Scriptures? Have his inquiries been made without partiality, passion, or precipitancy? Has he prayed earnestly for the grace of the Holy Spirit to enlighten his understanding? If he has not, his conscience may lead

him wrong : and sincerity is but a poor excuse to others, a still less satisfactory reason to his own mind, for his continuing in the path of error, which he has not taken the right means to avoid. —And he is violating the Unity of the Church.

Of the solemn prayer which Christ, after partaking the Passover with His disciples, addressed in their presence to his Heavenly Father, the most affecting characteristic is, the intensity of his supplication for the unity of his Church. *The glory which thou gavest me, says our Saviour, I have given them ; that they may be one ; even as we are one ; I in them, and thou in me ; that they may be made perfect in one **. In the awful hour of anticipation of his approaching agony and death, he had prayed that this unity, which was to make them perfect, might belong not only to the Apostles, but to his whole Church. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word : That they all may be one †*. And this unity is stated as the surest basis of universal faith in his Divine Mission. *That the world may believe that thou hast sent*

* John xvii. 22, 23.

† Ibid. 20, 21.

me. St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, adds to his solemn and earnest entreaties some explanation of the nature of the unity which he so powerfully and authoritatively recommends. And here I would take occasion to observe, that they appear to err most dangerously in their interpretation of Christian unity, who suppose (however in accordance the supposition may be with what are called the liberal principles of the times,) that the occasional association of discordant sects, who cannot unite in the same prayers, can constitute the unity prayed for by Christ, and enjoined by the Apostle: that a lasting uniformity can ever be established by the compromise of conscientious scruples, or by the concealment, for a time and for a purpose, of individual tenets. This is the language of the Apostle ; *Now I beseech you, Brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing ; and that there be no divisions among you : but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment* *. And how justly, and if I may so say, without desecrating the

* 1 Cor. i. 10.

character of an inspired teacher, how philosophically does he rebuke the early schisms of the Church, by this forcible appeal to their judgments, *Is Christ divided* *?

This leads me to consider the general conduct of St. Paul, sometimes misunderstood, on the subject of my present discourse. And let me premise, that we are never so truly the faithful servants of Christ as when we regulate our ministry by the pattern of St. Paul, who, with the humility and fidelity worthy of an apostle, requires us to be followers of Him, only as he was himself a follower of Jesus Christ.

St. Paul had to contend at once with Jews and Gentiles : with Jews, to whose earliest religious impressions the doctrine of the Cross was necessarily a stumbling-block ; with the refined race of the Greeks, to whom it naturally appeared foolishness. He adapted his discourses, accordingly, to the particular exigency of each. As Christ had in his addresses to the Sadducees, dwelt on the reasonableness of the Resurrection, and on the Divine authority for it in the very Scriptures they possessed ; and to the Pharisees,

* 1 Cor. i. 13.

on the necessity and usefulness of Ordinances, but, at the same time, on their secondary importance, when considered in relation to the purity of heart they were designed to symbolize and inculcate : So his miraculously chosen disciple ever suited his language to the particular necessities of his respective Churches : tolerant towards errors of education and habit, and patient towards natural infirmities : always endeavouring by gentleness, by kindness, to *win souls* *. He was *willing and glad*, he assured his converts, *to spend and be spent for them*, even *though the more abundantly he loved them, the less he was loved* †. But with all this tenderness of regard towards them, he never allowed his courtesy to compromise his duty. To unreasonable demands upon his forbearance, to *false brethren who came in privily to spy out the liberty* the converts had in *Christ Jesus*, that they might bring them into bondage, to them, he avouches boldly, *he gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour—* and this is the reason he gives for his firmness, *That the truth of the Gospel might continue*

* Prov. xi. 30.

† 2 Cor. xii. 15.

with them *. In this spirit, He allowed Timothy, the son of a Jewess, to undergo the abrogated ceremony of circumcision, as it was calculated to make him, at that particular period, a more acceptable and influential minister to the Jews. In this he betrayed not his trust, but acted after the ensample of his Master, who, though an eternal high priest, had submitted, on entering on his ministerial office to the Levitical institution of baptism. But when the Jews at Jerusalem demanded that Titus, the son of Gentile parents, should undergo the same rite, he resisted, declaring it no longer necessary, but in this case subversive of Christian liberty. On this, and on all occasions, it was evidently his aim *to give none offence, no just cause of offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God* †; and when he *pleased all men in all things*, his motive was not selfish, his compliances not unfaithful: it was *for their good to edification*. He *sought not his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved* ‡.

* Gal. ii. 4, 5.

† 1 Cor. x. 32.

‡ 1 Cor. x. 33.

That in becoming, according to his own emphatic language, *all things to all men**, he made no unworthy concessions; we have his own strong testimony in his declaration, that if he *sought to please men, he should be no longer the servant of Christ*†. Had his compliances been in opposition to the spirit of the Gospel, he could not have made them, as he assures us that he did, *for the Gospel's sake*‡. He could not have advanced the Gospel by lowering its precepts, or accommodating its requirements to the caprice of his hearers, however enlightened. He told his Corinthian brethren, that *a necessity was laid upon him to preach the Gospel, yea, that woe was unto him if he preached it not* §. And to his Galatian Church he had before declared with a vehemence which bespoke and became his fidelity to his Master, that if he or his fellow labourers, or (to make the affirmation still more striking, by supposing an impossible case,) even if an *angel from heaven should preach any other gospel unto them, he would be accursed* ||.

* 1 Cor. ix. 22.

† Gal. i. 10.

‡ 1 Cor. ix. 23.

§ 1 Cor. ix. 16.

|| Gal. i. 8.

The Gospel of Reconciliation is now complete. Gradually unfolded to man by a series of prophets, who spake as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance, and by Ordinances appointed by God himself to adumbrate the only availing sacrifice, the great atonement, the full and final redemption, it is now consummated by the Death and Resurrection of Christ. The doubts which soon after his Ascension began to perplex the faithful, have been long since removed, by Apostles writing under the sure guidance of inspiration. Insomuch that the Sacred Volume is acknowledged to contain all things, whether of doctrine or of precept, for our faith or our obedience, necessary for our salvation : and is, by the authority of the Holy Spirit, closed with a denunciation of present and eternal woe to every one who shall add to, or take away, from the words of the Sacred Book.

This everlasting Gospel, in its perfection and integrity, is by the same Spirit committed to our charge. This, and this only, we have solemnly sworn to make the basis of our instructions,—
 “ to teach nothing as required of necessity to
 “ eternal salvation, but that which we are per-
 “ suaded may be concluded and proved by the

“Scripture*.” And as we have bound ourselves not to teach any thing which is not contained in the Scriptures, or which may not be proved by it, so have we engaged to “minister all the “doctrine, the sacraments, and the discipline “of Christ†;” *to hold back nothing that is profitable to our hearers; to declare unto them all the counsel of God.*

Let us not then, my Reverend Brethren, be for a moment cast down, or deterred from following the plain path of our duty, by the imputation of intolerance sometimes cast upon our Church; or of want of liberal sentiments, applied, but, I trust, with as little shew of reason, to ourselves.

Intolerance can never be rightfully predicated of a Church which preaches not itself, but Christ, Christ crucified for all; a Church which is forward and zealous to disseminate the Gospel through all the regions of the earth; a Church which adds to the Gospel no traditions of men; which requires no services, and has instituted no ordinances which have not the warranty of Scripture; a Church, which not only

* The Ordering of Priests.

† Acts xx. 27.

invites, as to the exercise of a privilege, but enjoins, as a duty of paramount obligation, all its members, according to Christ's special command, to *search the Scriptures* * ; which encourages them to imitate the Bereans, whose commendation from the Apostle was, not only that they *received the Word with all readiness of mind*, but that *they searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so* †. In the same spirit our Church interferes, as of herself, with no man's conscience. She asks assent to no principles of her own devising. She requires faith of the reasoner upon reasonable grounds. She refers only to doctrines which existed in the Scriptures before the Church, from which she derives her existence, her orders, and her authority, was founded by Christ, and built up by his Apostles; to those doctrines of His divinity, incarnation, and mediatorial office, on which He ordained His Church to be erected, as on a rock, against which he promised that *the gates of hell should never prevail* ‡. Intolerance may lengthen out the feeble ex-

* John v. 35.

† Acts xvii. 11.

‡ Matt. xvi. 18.

istence of a falling church, propped up by human devices, and striving to support itself by earthly dominion, but it could add no stability to an edifice deeply founded on the rock of ages. St. Paul himself was intolerant, while strong in human learning, and firm in the world's morality, he was yet in ignorance and unbelief on the subject of Christ's kingdom. He then *made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison* *. He then *breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord* †; but when he was miraculously called to *preach the faith which once he had destroyed* ‡ with all his former zeal, how forbearing became his demeanour! with all his accustomed earnestness of manner, how mild, how gentle, how persuasive his addresses!

Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God §. *Now I Paul myself beseech you, by*

* Acts viii. 3.

† Gal. i. 23.

† Ibid. ix. 1.

§ 2 Cor. v. 20.

the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you *.

Nor is it only to *the doctrine* (the doctrine †, κατ' ἐξοκην) which we are appointed to teach, that we ought now to take heed with peculiar jealousy, but to *ourselves*. Far be it from me to be supposed to have spoken in derogation of science, or with apprehension as to the results of its widest diffusion. The faithful Minister must hail with joy the rapid progress of the present age in intellectual attainments. True science has ever been the hand-maid of religion. It is often hers to clear up what was obscure, to confirm what appeared to be doubtful, and thus to shed around the Sacred Volume a new, an unexpected illumination. She has thus appeared to be one of the means, since the cessation of miraculous interpositions, designed by the Divine Spirit to enlighten and to cheer the path of the believer; and to invite and to lead the steps of the doubtful to the temple of Divine Truth. But when human science, vain of the facility with which she may have subdued prejudice and error in worldly concerns, acquires

* 2 Cor. x. 10.

† Ἐπέχε σεαυτῷ, καὶ τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ. 1 Tim. iv. 16:

an overweening confidence in her own powers,—when she indicates a contempt of sacred institutions, and a disdain of the helps to devotion and religious peace, which are mercifully vouchsafed to our weak and limited faculties in Sacraments and Ordinances ;—when, forgetting that *the world by wisdom knew not God*, she presumes to undervalue the claims of Revelation, and to question the influence and authority of a visible Church :—when thus she walks, *after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*, her torch affords then only an unsteady gleam, a bewildering glare ; her power becomes an unmitigated despotism. The Apostle in the text does not proscribe *philosophy*, properly so called, but that which is associated with *vain deceit*. It becomes us, indeed, at this time, if ever, to extend to its utmost possible limit the horizon of our knowledge, sacred and profane. To continue to be efficient instructors, we must preserve our relative station in society by higher attainments in secular as well as sacred erudition. We cannot otherwise retain the respect and confidence of those who have a right to expect that *the priest's lips should keep knowledge*, if they are to seek the law at his mouth* ; and if

* Malachi ii. 7.

we would not leave them a prey to artful enemies of the faith, it behoves us to provide ourselves with arrows even from the quiver of human philosophy, that we may be prepared with weapons like her own to repel her attack. *Sent forth as sheep in the midst of wolves*, we are taught by Him who first committed his Apostles to this arduous encounter, to be *wise as serpents*, while we are *harmless as doves**; to be able to argue with the sceptic, and to confute the gainsayer; while to the humble believer we bear the olive branch of peace: of that peace which the world cannot give, which the world cannot take away.

And, indeed, we should be grievously inobedient of the character of our National Church, if we did not, as her ministers, imbibe, towards even gainsayers, the spirit of Christian charity: *gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves*†; *giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed, but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience*; and if it should again be required of his ministers, *in afflictions, in neces-*

* Matt. x. 16. † 2 Tim. ii. 24.

*sities, in distresses : by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the Word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil-report and good report ; as deceivers, and yet true **.

Deceivers perhaps in the estimation of those who are reluctant to learn the will of God ; but in the award of our own consciences *true*, and true in the conviction of those who, having first shewn a readiness to do His will, *shall know of our doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether we speak of ourselves* †. But while, by the blessing of God, the different orders of His ministers, under the favour of our happy Constitution, mix with all the grades of society as equals : while the Clergy are thereby enabled to conciliate the attention of all ranks and degrees of men among us to their instruction ; while thus, by our courtesy and good-will, we endeavour to “ maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in us, quietness, peace, and love among all Christian people, and especially among them

* 2 Cor. vi. 3. † John vii. 17.

“that are committed to our charge*,” we must not forget that, as servants of Christ, we have, however mixed in society, a distinctive character: while we concede every thing which it is ours to grant, and which we can grant without being unfaithful to our trust, we must not, we dare not, surrender to a vain philosophy, or deceitful liberality, a particle of essential doctrine; we dare not to allow sophistry to misinterpret, or licentiousness to compromise one iota of revealed truth; we dare not to permit the sceptic to question, unanswered, one single promised reward; nor the libertine to deny, unrefuted, one of the least of those *terrors of the Lord*, by which we are appointed to *persuade men* † to holiness.

Revealed truth, let us always bear in mind, is ever the same; while human systems are reared and overthrown; while worldly science is ever liable to vicissitudes, to darkness, and to error; while states and empires rise and fall promiscuously, Religion, formed in the councils of heavenly wisdom, can know no change: emanating from Him, in whom is no variable-

* The Ordering of Priests.

† 2 Cor. v. 11.

ness or shadow of turning, it must of necessity, through everlasting ages, continue like its Divine Original, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. *Heaven and earth, O Lord, shall pass away, but thy words shall not pass away* *! *Thy salvation shall be for ever, and thy righteousness shall not be abolished* †!

Charged with a divine commission to spread the knowledge of Christian truth, we must recollect that we are, to use our Saviour's own illustration, *the salt of the earth* ‡; as the expounders of this truth, we are *the light of the world* §; as separated for the ministry, we are *a city set upon an hill, which cannot be hid* ||. If, in our intercourse with the world, we concede to its errors, and bow ourselves down to its follies; if we lower the standard of Christian doctrine to suit the opinions of men; if we do not rather elevate their minds to a right conception of the purity of Christian virtue; *the salt* truly hath *lost its savour*, the *light* shineth only to betray, and we are exposed, by our own elevation, to

* Matt. xxiv. 35.

† Isaiah li. 6.

‡ Matt. v. 13.

§ Matt. v. 14.

|| Matt. v. 14.

the scorn and contempt of those whom it was our duty to have preserved from corruption, and darkness, and death.

Every term which in Scripture designates our office, marks also our duty, not merely as expounders, but as defenders of the truth of Holy Writ. We are *set for the defence of the Gospel**; let us be vigilant to countervail the insidious machinations of the secret enemy of the Faith; let us *take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, wherewith to repel the undisguised attack of the bolder adversary: ever remembering that our *strength is only in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. We are *shepherds of Christ's flock*; let it be our constant study to feed them as his sheep, and for his sake; to lead them to pure fountains; to keep them in one fold; to win back, if peradventure it may be granted to us, those who have gone astray, and are in danger of being lost; and on no account to *leave the sheep and flee*†, *when we see the wolf coming*. We are the appointed *stewards of the mysteries of God* ‡; as we have

* Phil. i. 17.

† John x. 12.

‡ 1 Cor. iv. 1.

*received the gift, even so let us minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God * ; nor forget the account we must render of our stewardship, when we may be no longer stewards. Above all, we are made watchmen unto the house of Israel † ; let us, having heard the word at God's mouth, give them warning from God. When the liberal reasoner, not indeed denying the justice of God, but determining, according to his own fallible and finite understanding, what is justice, and what is mercy, and how far divine justice may be tempered with mercy, says, in the language of the first Tempter, *Ye shall not surely die* ; let us remember who it is that hath said unto the wicked, *Ye shall surely die* : and who hath of old declared unto the watchmen of Israel : *When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die ; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life ; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness,**

* 1 Pet. iv. 10.

† Ezekiel xxxiii. 7.

*nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity ; but thou hast delivered thy soul *.*

And now, my Reverend Brethren, I have thought it *meet to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth † ;* and may God, of his infinite mercy, grant that we, who know these things before, may, together with all who attend upon our ministry, beware lest, being led away with the error of the wicked, we *fall from our stedfastness.* May we all *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* To Him, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, three Persons, one God, *be glory, both now and for ever. Amen ‡.*

* Ezekiel xxxiii. 8, 9.

† 2 Peter i. 12.

‡ 2 Peter iii. 17.

THE END.

By the same Author.

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LONDON:
PRINTED BY R. GILBERT,
ST. JOHN'S-SQUARE.

A 34.28.
S E R M O N 4

PREACHED AT THE
PARISH CHURCH OF LOIS WEEDON,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE,
August the 3d, 1828,
BEING THE SUNDAY FOLLOWING

THE
Funeral

OF THE
REV. THOMAS LLOYD, A.M.
LATE VICAR OF THAT PARISH.

BY THE REV. C. JACKSON,
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London:

PRINTED FOR C. & J. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD;
HATCHARD, PICCADILLY; AND SEBLEY, FLEET STREET;
AND SOLD BY DICEY AND SMITHSON, NORTHAMPTON; TOMALIN,
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A SERMON.

ST. MATTHEW XXV, 21.

"His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful sercant ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

THESE words, which I have chosen for the subject of our meditations, on this melancholy occasion, are taken from the Parable of the Talents, and appear to me peculiarly applicable to the character of your deceased Vicar.

In the following discourse, it shall be my endeavour,

1st. To give a short explanation of the parable.

2dly. To give such a description of the Ministerial Character of our departed Friend, as will justify us in believing, that he shall receive, from the lips of his Saviour, the joyful salutation contained in the words of the text.

And, lastly, conclude with a few words of exhortation to different classes of my hearers.

1. I am to give a short explanation of the parable, which is thus recorded by St. Matthew.

“The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord’s money. After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents besides them. His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Then he which had received the one talent

came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed; and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast that is thine. His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

By "the kingdom of heaven," mentioned in the parable, is to be understood the Christian Church or Gospel dispensation on earth. The "man travelling into a far country" is JESUS CHRIST. His servants, in the primary signification of the words, are the Ministers of the Gospel: but in their general and more extended application, is included the whole christian world. The talents with which he entrusts them are the knowledge of his will, the gifts and graces of his Spirit, mental endowments, riches, rank, and influence. Their trading with them represents our journey through

life; the improvement of our talents,—our progress in religion; and the burying them in the earth, our disregard of eternal things. The time of reckoning is the day of judgment. The many things over which the approved servants of God shall be made rulers are the joys of heaven. And the outer darkness, into which the unprofitable servant was cast, is that horrible place where the wicked shall be tormented for ever with the Devil and his angels.

We also learn from the parable before us, that God is the sovereign disposer of all things; and that he dispenses his blessings, to each individual, in such proportion as he pleaseth. To one he gives five talents; to another two; and to another one; hence the different ranks and degrees in society. "The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich." "He giveth wisdom and understanding," and withholdeth them, from whom He pleases. While some are entrusted with power and placed in authority, it is the province of others to obey; each man has his respective talents appointed him, which he is required to improve; and according to his improvement or neglect of them, will be the condition assigned him, by his impartial judge, in the great day of reckoning.

JESUS CHRIST, on his leaving this world, went indeed into a far country, even into the heaven of heavens; but before His ascension, He gave authority to his disciples, "to preach the gospel to

every creature." He, at the same time, assured them that "all power, both in heaven and in earth, was given him" by God the Father, and that he would "continue with them always, even unto the end of the world." St. Paul tells us that CHRIST JESUS is "the Head over all things to the Church," and that "by him all things consist." He therefore orders, and directs, and governs the world as he pleases. Nothing can befall us in life but what is under his control. If we are blessed with health, it is he who bestows it upon us. If we are visited with sickness, we know who has said, that "affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; but that "whom the LORD *loveth* he afflicteth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." What an animating truth, my Christian Brethren, is this! How full of comfort and consolation to the *sincere* christian, to know that his most merciful Redeemer is at the helm of the universe, and shall make "all things,"—even the afflictions, distresses, and bereavements of life,—the rending asunder the closest ties,—the dissolution of those bonds which love and sympathy, and the august ceremonies of religion have cemented, "work together for his" eternal "good."

Our privileges are great, as a Nation, if we merely regard our Civil Institutions, the protection that is afforded to our persons and property, the impartial administration of excellent laws, and the

free scope that is given for the exercise of individual talent, and the attainment of the highest honors. But great as our civil privileges undoubtedly are, they are as dust in the balance when compared with our religious ones. By our excellent Ecclesiastical Establishment, which is apostolic in its origin, whose rites and ceremonies are decent and orderly, and whose liturgy is truly scriptural, a body of more than ten thousand men are distributed in as many parishes, throughout this kingdom, whose education fits them for the society of the great and noble, and whose sacred calling leads them to have frequent intercourse with the poor and illiterate. This, I say, is a great blessing to this Country, whether we consider the moral worth of the Clergy, the sound religious instruction they impart to the community, their advice and direction in worldly affairs, or their various acts of kindness in reproofing the vicious, exhorting the careless, consoling the afflicted, and comforting those that mourn. These are labours of love which are done, without parade or ostentation, in a greater or less degree, by the Clergy in every parish of this kingdom; and they are the principal means, under God, not only of promoting harmony and peace, and connecting more closely the different orders of society; but of kindling and keeping alive in the nation a spirit of true piety. What has been the life of your excellent and lamented Vicar; but a life dedicated to God, and you? — to God, as the first and great object of love and

adoration; to you, as "the flock over which the HOLY GHOST had made him overseer." Faithful, indeed, he has been in the discharge of these duties, and great have been your religious advantages in having such a Minister to preside over you for the last twenty-two years. But, by the same Almighty arm, that placed him amongst you, he is removed to the blessed mansions above, where, I trust, he will meet with many of your departed friends and relations, whom his example and sound doctrine, under the blessed guidance of GOD'S Spirit, have nourished up into eternal life; and who will be his crown of rejoicing in the great day of account. His time of reckoning, my Brethren, is now come; and yours is delayed only a little longer, that you may work out your salvation, and prepare to meet your GOD. You have received your talents, which are yet in your hands; and among these talents are the religious advantages you have long possessed; let me ask, then, how have you used them? Have you gained by trading with them, or have you buried them in the earth? These are momentous questions, to which, it much concerns you all to return faithful answers. Let me entreat you, therefore, to look back on your past lives, and consider how you have *improved* your talents; for the parable teaches us that those only who do so shall meet the approbation of their Judge.

2dly. I proceed to give such a description of the conduct and Ministerial Character of our departed Friend and Father, as will justify us in believing, that he shall receive from the lips of his Saviour the joyful salutation, "Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

His talents, indeed, were numerous and great, and, therefore, proportionally great was his responsibility; for of him, to whom much is given, will much be required. But I would not even glance at his great literary attainments, which were all made subservient to Religion, and which, thus united, ranked him high in his profession; and would have enabled him to have discharged its highest offices with benefit to the Church, had it pleased God to have called him to the discharge of such offices. It is not, however, with what he *might* have been; but what he *was* in the discharge of his duties as a Parish Priest in this place, that I am more immediately concerned, and to which I mean chiefly to direct your attention.

What then are the duties of a Minister? They are many and diversified, and such as God only can enable the best of his servants adequately to fulfil; but his principal duties may be thus briefly summed up.

It is the duty of a Minister publicly to preach "the whole counsel of God," through all its doctrines and duties, laying the foundation in the ex-

piatory sacrifice of CHRIST, and building thereon the superstructure of good works: it is his duty privately to instruct and comfort the sick and afflicted: to reprove, warn, and exhort "the whole as need requires, and he sees occasion to be given:" it is his duty to pray for all, and set his parishioners an example of all purity in faith and practice. Such are a few of the great duties of the "Stewards of the mysteries of GOD." Let us now enquire how these duties have been discharged by him, whose loss we all deeply deplore. And in this enquiry, I shall dismiss every prejudice, and as far as I am able, divest myself of that partiality, which, an uninterrupted friendship for nearly seven years, and the sacred connexion subsisting between us may be supposed to have produced.

With regard to his Public Ministrations; one of the points to which he frequently and earnestly directed your attention, and which he justly considered of the last importance to be rightly understood, in order to your making any advancement in the Divine Life, is, the relation in which we stand to GOD by nature; that "we are born in sin and children of wrath;" that Adam, by transgressing the command of the Most High in paradise, fell from his original righteousness; and not only became mortal, and subject to all the pains and sorrows incident to mortality; but contracted a corruption of nature, and incurred the penalty of eternal death. "By one man," says St. Paul, "sin

entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

Upon this universal depravity of man, and his consequent liability to eternal punishment, is founded the necessity of a Redeemer, who might, by suffering in our stead, reconcile us to our offended GOD. These great doctrines of the Fall and Recovery of man, are closely connected. As it could only drive us to despair to know that we are sinners and liable to GOD's wrath, without also knowing that a way of Salvation is provided for us; so it could profit us nothing to know that we have a Saviour, unless we also know our state of alienation from GOD; for in this case we should never apply to him for salvation. As we must be sick before we apply for medicine, so we must be conscious of our sins and offences against GOD, before we can supplicate pardon and mercy; the HOLY SPIRIT must convince us of our sin and danger, or we shall never go to CHRIST as our Saviour; we must be "pricked in our hearts," or we shall never enquire with the earnestness of the Jews of old, "what we must do to be saved;" we must feel that we are sinking into the pit of destruction, before we shall cry out in the language of the disciples, "LORD save, we perish."

To those who, by the blessing of GOD are thus convinced of sin, and feel its burden, it is the duty and privilege of the Christian minister to point out "the Lamb of GOD, which taketh away the sin of

the world." And, oh! with what earnestness and tender solicitude for your highest welfare did your late affectionate Pastor direct you to this "fountain opened for sin and uncleanness," in the full assurance that you might wash and be clean! He knew that the Saviour had voluntarily interposed between us and his Father's wrath; that he had left the glories of his heavenly kingdom, and came upon earth, to suffer death upon the cross for us men and our salvation. He had found him to be precious to his own soul; and this love of CHRIST constrained him to preach his offered salvation to others, that they too might find rest from the burden of their sins, and derive from his fulness all spiritual blessings necessary for their future warfare. The unsearchable riches of CHRIST crucified was his delightful theme. Here, all the energies of his powerful mind seemed to be concentrated, and the benignity of heaven beamed in his countenance while accents of grace and mercy flowed from his tongue.

Nor did he ever neglect to press upon you the conditions, Faith and Repentance, on which alone you can become partakers of CHRIST'S offered mercy;—a faith, not merely historical, but of Divine origin,* wrought in your hearts by the HOLY

* "As the increase and perfection, so the original, or initiation of Faith is from the Spirit of God, not only by an external proposal in the word, but by an internal illumination in the soul; by which we are inclined to the obedience of Faith, in assenting to those truths; which unto a natural and carnal man are foolishness." Bp. Pearson on the Creed, Art. 8.

GHOST, a "faith which purifies the heart;"—which inclines you to be willing to be saved in the manner he appoints; which inclines you to cast aside every other dependence, and to adhere to him as your only hope, which leads you to accept him in his three great offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; as Prophet to instruct you, as Priest to atone and intercede for you, and as King to rule over you. Such, my Brethren, is the faith, by which alone we can "overcome the world," or produce in our lives the "peaceable fruits of righteousness."

And what is repentance? Is it the breaking off a few sins, from worldly prudence, which may be found to be troublesome and inconvenient; or is it a mere reformation of the outward conduct? It is neither. This is partial amendment, but not true repentance. True repentance is a change of mind as well as a change of life. It is an inward loving and practising of what God commands; and a hating and avoiding of what he forbids. In the language of Scripture, it is a "conversion from sin to God;" a "being renewed in the spirit of our minds;" a "putting off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts of the flesh," and a "putting on the new man, which is created in righteousness and true holiness."

But I will not dwell longer on his Public Ministrations; though I might recal to your recollection his great solemnity in all the offices of religion; his tender and earnest exhortations to a diligent use of

the means of grace; his unwearied endeavours in building you up in the practice of every virtue, and his readiness to improve every alarming dispensation of God's providence to your eternal welfare.

Nor shall I detain you long in referring to the other duties you had a right to expect from him. His ill state of health would not allow him, indeed; to visit in his parish as much as he could have wished; but did he not always superintend the visiting of his Curate? Was it not his practice to invite you singly to his study, to prepare you for the LORD's table; or to give you such advice as your case seemed to call for? If any were sick or afflicted among you, has he not been visited, and comforted, and, if poor, relieved? Have infectious, contagious, or other virulent disorders, ever prevented us from kneeling at your bed sides, and comforting your drooping spirits with the healing balm and consolations of religion?

Again, has he not reproved by word, or in writing, *every* open transgressor,—whether rich or poor? This, my Brethren, is the most difficult part of ministerial duty. Sinners dislike being disturbed in their unhallowed courses, and will not bear reproof for their vices: hence, the most discreet and gentle admonitions of their minister will convert some bad men into personal enemies, who will not scruple, by every wicked means in their power, to lessen his influence in his parish, and strengthen

the bands of wickedness against him. Of this open hostility, perhaps no man of equal faithfulness ever experienced less than he whose departure hence fills our bosoms with sorrow. His reproofs left a testimony in his favour, in the consciences even of those who were not benefited by them; nor need we wonder, when we consider his great prudence and discretion, and his deep insight into the deceitful windings of the human heart. His maxim was, to hate the sin, and love the sinner; to consider what was his own duty, and the temper and spirit in which he was required to discharge it; then to perform it faithfully that he might deliver his own soul; the consequences of his reproofs he fearlessly left with God and the sinner.

Has he not, also, been the means, through your pecuniary assistance, of instructing the Children of the Poor in their duty both to God and man? Has he not been just and liberal in his worldly dealings,—charitable and humane in *all* his conduct? These things he hath done, and done them, you will readily allow, in the true spirit of Christianity, and according to the direction of St. Paul, when he says, “The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle towards all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.”

With regard to his Private Devotions, I would willingly draw a veil over them, till “He who seeth in secret shall” reveal “them openly;” but, as you

were interested in the benefit to be derived from his prayers, and cannot otherwise duly appreciate his character, it is fit that you should know, that he remembered you at the throne of Grace in private, and with his family; that in the composition of his sermons, he sought the direction of God's good Spirit; and before and after their delivery, retired to his closet, to implore the same Divine agent so to imprint his words upon your hearts, as to bring forth the fruits of holiness in your lives; so deeply was he convinced that, whether Paul plant, or Apollos water, it is God alone who can give the increase.

Such being the manner in which he discharged the arduous duties of a Minister of CHRIST, may we not reasonably conclude that, through the Grace of God, he has so improved his talents, as in the great day of account, to meet the approbation of his Judge, and receive from his lips the joyful salutation, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, —enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Comfort yourselves, my sorrowing Brethren, with this blessed hope, that your faithful Friend and Pastor has gone to his reward; and while you grieve for his loss, be unwearied in your prayers to the God of heaven, that his Sucoessor may be animated by the same ardent and enlightened spirit of piety, and that he may so "take heed to himself and to his doctrine, as to save himself and you that hear him."

But it is time to address a few words to different classes of my hearers; and

1st. To those who have thought him too strict in the discharge of his important duties.

Let me plead with you in justification of our zeal. "We are ambassadors for Christ" and "stewards of the mysteries of God." Now what is the duty of an ambassador, but to represent his king, and manage his interests, in foreign countries: or of a steward, but to conduct the affairs of his employer to the best advantage; so the duty of a minister is to speak as God in his word directs. What then are his directions? They are to this effect. "I have created man with an immortal soul, which he, by his disobedience, has ruined and undone; but I am unwilling that he should perish for ever. I have, therefore, given my Son to redeem him, and my Spirit to sanctify and prepare him for the enjoyment of heaven. O, Son of Man! I honor thee with the dignity of my ministry. I command thee to teach these great and important truths to my people; keep continually before thine eyes the immense worth of each single soul; give thyself wholly to thy sacred duties; be instant in season and out of season." "Reprove those who sin, that others may be afraid to offend." "If thou warnest not the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, he shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand." "Take heed, therefore, unto thyself, and to all the flock, over which

the HOLY GHOST hath made thee overseer, to feed the church of God."

Such is the language of the Almighty to the Pastors of His Church. Is not our line of duty then plain? Can we be too earnest in promoting that great work, in which the only begotten Son of God spent his whole life, and for which he shed his most precious blood? How unfounded is the charge of enthusiasm against those who pursue the objects of their ministry with enlightened zeal and persevering diligence! Men of this world are earpest in the pursuit of the perishing objects on which they place their affections; and shall not we be diligent in saving souls, each of which is of infinitely more value than the whole world, and all that it contains? What would have now been the condition of your departed Minister, whose day of reckoning is, at length, come, had he ceased to warn you "night and day," in sickness and in health,—in public and in private, to break off your sins by repentance,—to "cease to do evil, and learn to do well," to turn from dead works, to serve the living God? Instead of being welcomed, as we hope and trust, with the joyful sounds, "Well done good and faithful servant," God would have said unto him, The blood of the people of thy charge, who have died in their sins, I require at thy hands; depart from me.

What also would have been the state of his mind in his last illness, had not his conscience testified

that he "was clear from the blood of all men?" It would have been anguish and remorse, instead of patience under his sharp affliction, entire resignation to the Divine Will, unshaken faith in his Saviour, and even when his last hour approached, calmness, serenity, and peace.

2dly. Let me address those amongst you who have disregarded his repeated calls to repentance. It is high time for you, my Brethren, to awake from the sleep of sin and death. You have long been disobedient and despised the riches of God's goodness, and long suffering, which endure to this moment; but O, do not presume upon their continuance. The day of death will soon come, and it may come suddenly when you are ill prepared to render an account of the talents entrusted to your care. It will be no excuse to say that you have neither robbed nor defrauded, that you were honest and industrious, and respected by your neighbours. The question will be, have you *improved* your talents? You have had the Bible in your hands; have you studied its contents, and followed its directions, "not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the Word of God?" You have had a Sabbath, and a house dedicated to the Divine honor; have you sanctified the one by a holy rest, and statedly assembled with your brethren in the other? You have had the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, ordained for your great and endless comfort, and you are invited to approach it; do you accept the

invitation, or turn your back upon that sacred feast? You have the Holy Jesus as your Saviour; do you rely upon him as such, or do you expect to merit heaven, by your own imperfect services? You have the HOLY GHOST as your Sanctifier, and it is written that, "without holiness, no man shall see the LORD;" do you ever pray for his direction, and guidance? These are talents entrusted to your care, and by the right use of which, you must *increase* in the knowledge and practice of religion. This is their proper use, and unless this is done, you will be condemned with the unprofitable servant. Observe, he neither spent nor misemployed his talent; but was condemned for burying it in the earth, or not improving it. So, every religious privilege you enjoy through life, whether the instructions of pious parents, or the reproofs and admonitions of ministers, must be improved, or it will rise in condemnation against you. Every sermon from the lips of your late affectionate and faithful Pastor will be a swift witness to condemn you, if you repent not. But what his life could not accomplish, let his death effect. The voice, indeed, that affectionately exhorted, and solemnly warned you, is silent in the grave; but the providence of God, in his removal hence, cries aloud, repent,—repent ere it be too late. Oh! disregard not the silent eloquence of the grave, then, through the grace of God, shall *his* temporal death be your spiritual and eternal life.

Silly. What shall I say to you, my Brethren, who have profited by the ministry and example of your departed Vicar, and are making religion the grand concern of your lives? How shall I attempt to comfort you for a loss so great,—a loss that I feel equally with yourselves, which has deprived you of a kind and good Shepherd,—and me, of a wise Counsellor and valued Friend? The arm, indeed, that supported you in the hour of distress is withdrawn;—the eye that watched over you in all your ways is clouded in darkness;—the voice that directed you in difficulties and doubts, and reclaimed you in your wanderings, is hushed in silence. Your loss is great indeed; but do not sorrow as men without hope. Turn your eyes to brighter scenes and fairer prospects. Be thankful that he has been spared longer than you had reason to expect. Your earthly Pastor and Friend is indeed gone,—gone from the society of men, to the society of angels,—gone from the bosom of his family and his flock, to the bosom of his Father and his GOD; but you have an Almighty Friend and Great Shepherd who is still with you, and careth for you,—who has promised never to leave you nor forsake you,—who will comfort you in all your sorrows, and sanctify *this*, and all other afflictive dispensations of His providence to your eternal welfare. Only “be faithful unto death, and He will give you a crown of life.”

Finally, my Brethren, let me "exhort you all by the LORD JESUS, that as you have received of him, how ye ought to walk and to please GOD, so ye would abound more and more." May this season of privation be a season of deep meditation and prayer! May you grow and increase in the knowledge and love of GOD, and of his Son JESUS CHRIST, our Lord," till you come, with your beloved Pastor, to encircle his throne for evermore!

THE
JOURNAL OF THE
ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND
VOLUME 11. PART 1. 1881.
LONDON: PUBLISHED BY THE
PRINTERS OF THE INSTITUTE, 1, BEDFORD SQUARE, W.C.
1881.

Dissey & Smithson, Printers, Parade, Northampton.

SH. 1828.
THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE MINISTERIAL CHARACTER:

A
SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE
PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY'S, TRURO,

AT
The Visitation

OF THE
RIGHT REVEREND WILLIAM,
LORD BISHOP OF EXETER,

JULY XXVI. MDCCCXXVIII.

BY ROBERT LAMPEN, M.A.
VICAR OF PROBUS, CORNWALL,
AND MINISTER OF ST. ANDREW'S CHAPEL, PLYMOUTH.

PUBLISHED, WITH HIS LORDSHIP'S APPROBATION, AT THE
REQUEST OF THE CLERGY PRESENT.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR C. & J. RIVINGTON,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,
AND WATERLOO-PLACE, PALM-MALL.
SOLD ALSO BY J. PARKER, OXFORD;
E. HEARD, TRURO; AND J. B. ROWE, PLYMOUTH.

1828.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY R. GILBERT,

ST. JOHN'S-SQUARE.



TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND WILLIAM,
LORD BISHOP OF EXETER,
AND THE REVEREND THE CLERGY
OF THE
ARCHDEACONRY OF CORNWALL,
WHO ATTENDED THE
EPISCOPAL VISITATION AT TRURO,
JULY XXVI, MDCCCXXVIII,

This Sermon,
PUBLISHED WITH HIS LORDSHIP'S APPROBATION,
AND AT THEIR REQUEST,
IS MOST
RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY THEIR VERY FAITHFUL SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

CHAPTER

The first of the three great questions which the world was therefore engaged to him by the remem-

A

S E R M O N.

2 TIM. I. 13.

HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS * * * * IN FAITH AND
LOVE WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS.

THE affection of St. Paul for the Church which he planted at Ephesus, is beautifully illustrated in the history of his Christian labours. Ephesus had been the scene of his faithful ministrations; where he had proved, in many trials and afflictions, with what sincerity of heart he had embraced the religion of his once-persecuted Master. He had, in that city, served the Lord in all humility of mind, and with many tears, teaching repentance and faith both to the Jew and to the Greek, and setting before them the whole counsel of God; and thus, even in that proud seat of idolatrous magnificence, he had erected a spiritual house, an holy temple, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. The boast of Asia and the admiration of the Gentile world was therefore endeared to him by the remem-

brance of his sufferings for the sake of the Gospel, and the triumphant success with which they had been crowned: and we might reasonably expect that he would commit the care of a Church thus rescued from heathen darkness, and surrounded by the delusions of idolatry, only to one in whose fidelity and zeal he could repose unshaken confidence. Such a disciple he had in Timothy; his own son in the faith, who had laboured with him in the Gospel with truly filial affection and sympathy; whose pious education and unfeigned reception of the truth he well knew, and whom he could on all accounts remember with thankfulness in his prayers night and day. To him therefore he consigned the precious charge of those whom he had converted, at Ephesus, to the faith of Christ:—but neither affection, nor well-grounded confidence in his choice, induced the Apostle to lay aside the language of advice and caution. On the contrary, there are no parts of the sacred writings so full of direction for the proper fulfilment of the ministerial duties, as the two Epistles which St. Paul addressed to this his beloved friend and faithful disciple. Even on *him* it was thought necessary by the Apostle to enforce the important counsel of the text, which is a brief, but most comprehensive summary of all that is required in the minister of Christ: “Hold fast the form of sound words in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

An exhortation given with such earnestness to such a guardian and teacher of the Christian Church must demand the most serious attention from every one who is separated to the work of the ministry, whatever may be his fitness for the sacred office. There is no singleness of purpose—no devotion of the heart to God—no qualification of learning or eloquence—no benevolent zeal for the happiness of our human brethren, which can enable the Christian Minister safely to divert his attention from what is enjoined by this precept of profound wisdom. For as long as we have to struggle with those infirmities which contaminate our holiest things, so long shall we have to fear lest we should be led astray even in the indulgence of our best feelings; and so long will it be necessary that the Christian minister should keep steadily in view this outline of his sacred obligations, and remember that the effectual preacher of God's word must be distinguished at once by the soundness of his doctrinal views, the steadfastness of his adherence to the truth, and the decided but humble manifestation, in his daily life, of every Christian affection towards God and man:—that he must, in the language of the Apostle, “Hold fast the form of sound words in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

The foundation of ministerial usefulness must be

laid in SOUND DOCTRINE. The Almighty has condescended to impart to man the knowledge of his will in all things which relate to the moral discipline of the soul, and its restoration to once-forfeited happiness and neglected love. We are taught in the holy Scriptures the real condition of our fallen nature—the dangers with which we are surrounded in our pilgrimage—the spiritual assistance that will be graciously afforded to our sincere endeavours after holiness; and the Atonement, by which the demands of inflexible justice are answered, and the triumph of forgiving mercy completed—the necessity therefore of our being, in this our state of trial, humble and vigilant, conscious that our sufficiency is alone from God, who “worketh in us to will and to do;” and yet, that we have to “work out our own salvation,” that through faith in the perfect merits and satisfaction of Christ our Saviour, we can alone hope for our justification in the sight of God; and yet that we must strive to “grow in grace,” and to labour as earnestly as if all depended on ourselves. These are some of the important doctrines which the sacred Scriptures reveal, and the duties which naturally result from their proper reception; but how does the pride or the weakness of man destroy the simplicity, or impair the integrity, of this consolatory and practical instruction? How often do we find partial representations of scriptural truth

produce, in effect, a separation between the doctrines and duties of Christianity, and give an appearance of undue exaltation to one of the essentials of the Christian character, Faith or Works, as the mental habits of the individual may incline towards devotional sentiment, or the moral observances of life. How frequently is some mysterious part of the Christian doctrine exhibited as if it were the whole of Christianity: and attention to those topics of affectionate exhortation, which the more directly practical parts of Scripture may suggest, considered as some forgetfulness of our commission to preach the Gospel. As if the great object of all Scripture was not to make "the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." As if it were enough to be "fervent in spirit" without "serving the Lord." As if a single moral virtue could lose, in any degree, its importance and its beauty, because "the grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared unto all men!" Surely this is to preach another Gospel than that which has been delivered to us, which connects the interests of time and eternity, and teaches us that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

It is unnecessary for me to enumerate the various ways in which the volume of inspiration has been used as giving its holy sanction to the partial views of man. We all know that there is no extravagance of opinion which has not sometimes obtained for itself respect by founding its claims on the apparent authority of some detached portions of Scripture. Even the mysteries of our faith have been thus rejected with an unholy presumption; and the bold speculations of a specious infidelity have attempted to rob man of that "anchor of the soul sure and stedfast," the faith in an incarnate Saviour, the belief "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Amidst such departures from the purity and integrity of primitive Faith, and such contentions about the true interpretation of Scripture, we have indeed reason to bless God, that the Bible has never been unaccompanied by an authorised and instructed ministry. That from the earliest period of the Christian Church, some have been bound, by the most sacred obligations, to devote themselves "to prayer and the ministry of the word." That holy office has devolved upon us, my brethren, and it is therefore our duty to watch with a godly jealousy the records of divine truth. Nor shall we faithfully fulfil our trust, unless we implore wisdom from HIM who can alone bless our enquiries; and at the same time use all diligence, and employ every aid that

may illustrate and explain the sacred writings. For the Bible is not intended to supersede every other means of Grace, nor does the possession of that sacred treasure render all other knowledge useless and insignificant. On the contrary, it calls for the best employment of our best imparted powers. We must indeed remember that we are on holy ground when we draw near to the revealed wisdom of God; but we are not forbidden to turn and see this great sight; we are not denied the reverential use of the faculties committed to our trust: on the contrary, we are taught to enquire of the doctrine, to "search the Scriptures;" and to do this effectually we must have recourse to the secondary means of human learning; we must "bring forth out of our treasure things new and old," that we may be "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven." The labours of the pious and the learned, the researches of science, the moral and social history of man, all invite our diligent attention, that we may learn "rightly to divide the word of truth," to meet the various wants of those committed to our care, and "to give a reason of the hope that is in us." To refuse, or to undervalue, the assistances of human learning, because the Word of God is a light to our paths, would be like declining the use of our bodily senses when the brightness of the sun shines around us. The God who has given us the Scriptures, has

given us also the faculties by which we may understand their meaning ; nor can it be reasonably supposed that the employment of our best powers in the service of the Almighty Giver, betrays any want of reverence for the wisdom that is from above. Learning indeed is not *necessary* to salvation, for the Word of Life adapts itself to every condition of human intellect, and the poorest of our Christian brethren need not despair because his knowledge is limited ; but it is the duty of the Clergy to recollect, that the appointed ministry of the Word is one of the means by which the providence of God protects that limited knowledge from dangerous error ; and upon us therefore it is incumbent, to use every method, which may explain or illustrate or recommend the Scriptures ; and thus, while we carefully avoid the presumption of human ingenuity, the licentiousness of intellect, the besetting sin of those who are conscious of mental power, we must strive to become efficient instructors and safe guides ; while we bring every rich endowment of the mind, as well as every moral virtue and every spiritual grace to “ adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.”

But whatever care we may have taken to obtain sound views of Christian doctrine, we must cultivate with equal care **STEDFASTNESS OF PRINCIPLE**. Conscious of the weakness of our nature, we should endeavour,

by every means, to strengthen our attachment to the truth; and amidst the conflicts of human opinion, to remain unshaken, and to "hold fast our confidence and our rejoicing of hope firm unto the end." For it is our duty to fix the wavering, and to strengthen the weak hearted; to draw into one the sheep of Christ's fold that are scattered abroad. We must therefore prove to all that we entertain an unity of interest and intention with the truly scriptural Church to which we belong. In conformity to the spirit which her services and her institutions inculcate, we must "preach not ourselves, but Christ "Jesus the Lord," that we be not led astray by the vanity of the heart, from a simple declaration of Gospel truth. We must each of us contribute towards sustaining the true character of our Church, and exhibit her to the world as having one holy object, and as drawing her servants and her children together in one holy bond of spiritual union, preserving the beautiful harmony of faith and obedience, of doctrine and discipline. It is only a strict attention to this duty of consistent allegiance to the cause which we have solemnly espoused, that can protect us from the many allurements which endanger the firmness of our attachment to sound doctrine. The world is continually presenting excitement to our feelings, and making the sober dictates of a collected but pious mind appear lukewarmness; or investing

holy and well-directed energy with the character of disproportionate zeal. We are thus constantly solicited to censure what we should admire, and to deviate from the safe path into extremes destructive of Charity, and not seldom of the purity of Faith itself. We have also to contend against visionary speculations, and theories for perfecting our nature, which are captivating in their promises, but built upon unsound views of our moral and intellectual constitution. We must indeed rejoice in every rational design for the improvement of society, and respect every conscientious scruple : it is our duty and privilege to seek, in every way, the welfare of our brethren, and to shew them that we assume not a proud "dominion over their faith," but desire to be helpers of their Christian joy ; but if we regard ministerial faithfulness, we must beware of every scheme of improvement, however popular, which has a tendency to destroy the steadfastness of religious principle, and to disguise under the name of liberality, an indifference to every "form of sound words," as if in his mortal state the spirit of man could exist without the body ; as if a consistent adherence to the "faith once delivered to the saints" could be preserved, while we are careless of every principle of Church communion, and consequently, "blown about by every wind of doctrine."

But our doctrine may be sound, and our adherence to it steadfast, and yet the ministerial character incomplete. What then more is requisite? "FAITH AND LOVE WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS." Those dispositions of the heart towards God and man which the mysteries and mercies of Christianity so powerfully inculcate. It is not *opinion* but *principle* for which we must entertain a godly jealousy, and we must, therefore, make our faith, and our attachment to sound doctrine, the means of personal holiness. We must illustrate the rectitude and the firmness of our principles by the beautiful agreement of a pious and exemplary conduct; drawing near to God in the constant devotion of the heart—and to man in all the charities of daily life; and thus giving no advantage to the scoffer; occasioning no discouragement to those who by our counsel seek to free themselves from the power of sin; no grief to those who reverence our holy calling; but "by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God," and "letting our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven."

Such is the spirit of the Apostle's injunction to Timothy. Such, my brethren, is the spirit of the solemn pledge we all of us, at our Ordination, gave

at the altar of God. And how admirably does the constitution of our Church provide those who engage in her pastoral labours, with the means of fulfilling these sacred obligations ! They are exempted from the excessive pressure of secular cares, and enabled to devote their chief attention to the objects of their holy calling. They have opportunities and constant need to consult the Scriptures, and to bring all the light of knowledge and experience to the illustration of these Oracles of God. They are provided with a "form of sound words," so that the language of prayer and praise which they employ in their ministrations, brings the whole counsel of God continually before their eyes and their hearts. By the calm uniformity of their sacred occupations they are protected from the delusions to which an unsettled habit of life is exposed, and by their acquaintance with the real feebleness of man's nature, they learn the fatal mistake of those who represent man as sufficient to his own salvation, without the aid of divine grace ; and they live under circumstances which will not allow forgetfulness of faith and love. Confined to a limited sphere of ministration, they are, by the constitution of their Church, protected from the temptation to "stretch themselves beyond their measure," and to substitute the reputation of the mere preacher for the enduring praise of the faithful pastor : a temptation to which

those are exposed, who are not restrained by such salutary limits; and hence less difficulty may be encountered in cultivating steadfastness of principle, and those affections towards God and man, which are endangered by a mere popular and cursory exercise of the ministerial office. For we must not deceive ourselves—the Gospel is only “a savour unto life” when it becomes a principle of life, and shews itself forth in the habitual conduct of the Christian. It is easy to awaken temporary feelings of devotion, but not so, to turn the heart of the sinner, in unseen but effectual penitence to God—and to induce him to “shew forth his faith in meekness of wisdom.” For this a Christian adviser, to whom he may become firmly attached, is wanted: one, who has known his manner of life; who is conversant with his infirmities; who has brought comfort and advice to those who are dear to his heart: one, whom he has learned to reverence for his work’s sake, and with whose sacred office the first thoughts of religion were connected in his opening mind. The Parish Priest affords him all this, and from him, as from the patriarch of a united family, the continual influence of repeated and well-applied admonition, and the silent efficacy of example, and sympathy in all the joys and sorrows of life, may be felt by all who will avail themselves of this inestimable means of cultivating pure and undefiled religion.

How highly then should we reverence the character, and how earnestly should we endeavour to preserve, amidst all the novelties of social life, the simplicity, and the usefulness, of the Christian pastor! In endeavouring to realize to ourselves all that this privileged condition of life may afford, we must meet with many obstacles; and in the present day, they will be found very serious; but we must persevere "through evil report and good report;" we must remember that our labours will not be estimated by the Lord of the harvest according to their success, but according to their faithfulness; and therefore we must "in the morning sow our seed, and in the evening not withhold our hand, although we know not which shall prosper." We must not turn away from a holy enterprise because we meet with worldly discouragements; but it is our bounden duty to continue to "hold fast the faithful word as we have been taught." "In all things shewing ourselves patterns of good works; in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us." Let us thus labour and God will give the increase. Let us not be wanting to ourselves, and the blessing of God will not be withheld from us.

And let it be your care, my Christian brethren, to whom we are commissioned to preach the word of salvation, to aid us by your affection, your prayers, and your zealous co-operation in all things that may advance the success of the appointed ministry of the Gospel. Thus will TRUTH, and STEDFASTNESS, and FAITH, and LOVE, be preserved amidst the conflicts and dangers of the world; the harmony of the Christian family on earth will be secured "in the unity of the spirit and in the bond of peace," and we shall all appear as "one flock under one shepherd, Jesus Christ the righteous."

THE END.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY R. GILBERT,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

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S. H. 1828.

*The Doctrines of Christianity, especially the preeminently
Evangelical Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, shewn
to be essential to give effect to a Moral Education.*

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S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, BEDFORD,

AT THE

VISITATION

OF THE

VENERABLE HENRY KAYE BONNEY, D.D.

ARCHDEACON OF BEDFORD,

APRIL XXIX. MDCCCXXVIII.

BY

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PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CLERGY.

OXFORD,

PRINTED BY W. BAXTER,

FOR J. PARKER; C. AND J. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD, AND
WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON; AND J. MERRY, BEDFORD.

1828.

TO THE
VENERABLE THE ARCHDEACON,

AND TO THE
REVEREND THE CLERGY,
THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE

IS BY PERMISSION
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY THEIR OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

EPHESIANS vi. 4.

Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

THE instruction which this precept is designed to convey will be found, upon a strict and careful examination, to be of the highest value and importance; and, though addressed more immediately to Parents, as the persons primarily concerned in it, appears to demand in an equal degree the serious consideration of every one, to whom the charge of education is either wholly or partially entrusted. This claim which it possesses is greatly increased by the emphatic language in which it is conveyed to us, from a due attention to which, in connection with other testimonies, some very pertinent information is derived. For we should observe that the figurative expressions and allusions of the text lead us directly to the very obvious inference, that at the time when St. Paul wrote, the infant children of believers were considered as included in the

covenant of grace, that they were in consequence admitted within the precincts of the visible Church, and thus obtained a share in the affectionate regards of those persons, to whom the oversight of the flock was committed. The Apostle's expressions could only be understood by those to whom they were addressed, upon the persuasion that the great evangelical promise had been fulfilled not only to themselves, but even to their children also, who thus became graciously adopted into the family of God. Viewed in this capacity they were not thought unworthy of the attention of this great Apostle, whose concern for their welfare appears from the text, and other passages of the same import. In like manner in later times, the reformers of the Church of England have not been backward to imitate the example here set them; as they have abundantly shewn by the care and diligence which they have employed, as far as their pastoral authority over the Christian fold extended, to secure to such as might fitly be compared to the lambs of the flock, the enjoyment of that great blessing and privilege, which the Apostle designates *the being brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*.—An attentive examination of the meaning of these expressions may tend to our edification and advantage,

and may by the blessing of God rest upon our endeavours for that purpose.

The advantages of a general system of education are at the present day so highly appreciated, as to need no further arguments in their support; but we have therefore the more reason to lament, that the necessity of making religion a part of the system is either not so well understood, or not sufficiently considered; although experience warrants the assertion, that positive infidelity is the natural fruit of the neglect of a religious education. This is easily accounted for: the natural bent and inclination of the human mind is known to be unfavourable to religion; it requires then to be changed, and to have a new direction given to it; but this must be done while the mind is tender, and the disposition pliable. The acquirement of religious knowledge must not therefore be deferred to riper years, or left to casual opportunities. For if the children themselves see those who are entrusted with their education neglecting this important part of it, or not giving it that prominence which it demands, (and they are quite capable of discerning its supreme importance if true,) they will certainly conclude that in point of fact it is not believed, and will wonder why *they* should be required to receive implicitly those

relations, of the truth of which their superiors in age and wisdom seem so little convinced. Religious instruction must be communicated early, as its simplicity intimates, before the mind becomes too strongly engaged on the side of earthly attainments, and in the pursuit of that knowledge which too often unfits it for the reception of divine truth.

The enquiry then presents itself, what may be correctly termed a *religious* education : and here in conformity with ordinary language, though confessedly inaccurate, we are compelled to distinguish it from what is *called* a MORAL education, in which obedience to rules and precepts is inculcated, without any proper reference to religious principles and motives. That this method is inaccurately so denominated, may be seen, if we take by way of example any one of the moral virtues, as that of gratitude for instance, and it will be evident that no man can be strictly termed moral who is ungrateful to the Author of his being; yet such is every one who is not actuated by religious principle. The mere statement will probably suffice, in order to expose the error and absurdity of grounding exhortations to virtue, solely on such motives as a regard to reputation or interest, or a desire of the approbation of our fellow creatures : motives which

indeed are excellent and useful in their place, but THAT they do not occupy when made the primary ground of our exhortations. Such a mode of proceeding is nothing else but most unaccountably to overlook the superior authority of God, as if he were excluded from all further concern in the world which he has created. Surely to neglect a motive so powerful and at the same time so obvious as that is, which a sense of the authority and a desire of the approbation of an Almighty Being affords, and to take up with others so inferior and comparatively inoperative, is to treat a solemn subject with a degree of levity which must eventually bring it into contempt ; for even the attentive and observing *child* will be ready almost instinctively to despise the instructions which are enforced in this manner. Let it however be supposed that religious principles are not entirely overlooked, and even then we are not sure but that they are often insufficiently stated, and that a very incorrect mode of reasoning is adopted. This is the case, whenever a child is exhorted to virtuous conduct in order that he may please God, and render himself acceptable to him, and that by thus gaining his favour he may be rewarded by him.

To inculcate obedience to the moral law in

the first place is, as it has been well observed, to attempt to erect the edifice without having previously laid the foundation ; it is commencing at that point at which we should rather hope at length to arrive. In order that our endeavours may be crowned with success, we must have recourse to the sublime and energetic doctrines of our religion, the holy principles which it offers to instill, and the effectual motives which it is able to supply. Whoever disregards these, and attempts to recommend to children the practice of moral duties, with the proud independent notion of pleasing God and gaining his favour, unconscious of obligations already incurred, and uninformed as to any assistance to be obtained, does in reality present to them an effectual discouragement at the very outset ; for where is the child who is not sufficiently sensible of his imperfections and natural inability, for to be convinced of the impossibility of the thing itself, and consequently to give up the attempt ? Need we wonder if such exhortations are received with listless indifference, or even with aversion ? No : a complete change of situation, a new relationship, easier terms of acceptance—the office in short of a Mediator—is what the mind of man will always be looking for, as the appropriate remedy, and only means of success.

Until we can induce the persuasion that such an alteration has been made, nothing can be effected, nor so much as a single step be taken; on the contrary, upon such a persuasion we may safely rely, indeed there is nothing which may not be hoped from it. They therefore who would not willingly bestow labour in vain in this important matter, will act wisely by following the directions of the Church in the Catechism, and by instructing children in the first place without any reserve, as to the nature of the great privileges of which they are actually possessed; viz. that they are already "made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven."

The formularies of the Church should not be slighted as obsolete, or such as might have sufficed for the time when they were composed, but must now give place to an improved system; for it is perhaps to the neglect of the very one just quoted, that the error I have endeavoured to point out is mainly to be attributed. A frequent recurrence to first principles may be even more necessary now, than it was at any former period. The care which our reformers have taken, to secure to the infant members of the Church a correct religious education, is clearly seen not only in their

providing this formulary, but also in not leaving the duty of instruction entirely to the parents; but making it the business of the Church itself, by enjoining upon the clergy the duty of catechizing; and by continuing the institution of sponsors, whom they wished to be persons capable of supplying any deficiency arising from the decease, incapacity, or negligence of the parents, as well as charitably disposed to execute the task. In the present temper of society, perhaps little is to be expected from this quarter; if so, it becomes still more incumbent upon the ministers of the Church, to use every means of remedying the deficiency, but especially to take advantage of that invaluable opportunity of ministerial usefulness, which the season preparatory to Confirmation affords us. Were the intentions of the Church duly fulfilled in this particular, what a powerful instrument would be provided for bringing about a general reformation in morals, so much so, that in time we would venture to hope it would render unnecessary those revolting exhibitions of the terrors of inexorable justice*, which unavoidably harden and exasperate, even while they deter. It is no small misfortune to the Church that a fastidious taste, which prefers display and effect to real utility, should

* Alluding to a late Execution.

have brought into disuse that very profitable part of the regular service, the public catechizing, in the presence of the congregation; a practice, which in addition to the benefit which the children now derive, would also present to the parents the most intelligible statement of Christian doctrine, and an exemplar of the true mode of religious discipline.

To proceed then with our enquiry after that method, which may be truly described as the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." A knowledge of the relationship, in which we stand to the Lord, is most surely an indispensable requisite. The doctrine of our redemption by Jesus Christ must be unfolded to the understanding of youth in a plain and simple manner, as the sole means whereby we become reconciled to God and restored to his favour; for this, being a work which we could never accomplish, is therefore not required of us, but has been completed by another on our behalf: they must be made to understand, that by virtue of their admission into the Christian Church, they are become members of Christ, and partakers of this great salvation; that their sins and frailties have the promise of pardon, and that they are now required to present the sincere obedience of children, instead of attempting to fulfil the impracticable task which

is sometimes proposed to them; for by their union to Christ the Son of God, they are made the adopted children of God, and may now regard the Almighty no longer as an offended Judge to be appeased, or as a Being wholly indifferent and unconcerned, whose favour needs to be purchased, but as their heavenly Father, to whom they are encouraged by past experience to look up for favour and protection, forbearance and forgiveness, aid and direction, and to look forward to their Father's house above as their home and inheritance; nay more than this, for they are already heirs in possession of the spiritual privileges of the Gospel dispensation, as they are heirs through hope of God's eternal kingdom of glory in heaven. The former constitute an earnest of the latter, and render them the children of grace, not only in the sense of pardon, but as possessing also the gift of divine life and spiritual strength, by the Holy Ghost. A serious reflection here presents itself, whether the endeavours of youth have not frequently been discouraged by a sense of weakness and insufficiency, or even frustrated by repeated failure, solely because their minds have been left in total ignorance, both of the state of salvation into which they have been brought, and of the gracious promise of strength from

above to which the Gospel entitles them: they are thus robbed of their birthright, and the loss of it is, we see, but indifferently compensated, by the usual routine of worldly motives and rewards, unaided resolutions of amendment, or equally inefficient threatenings and punishments. Strictly in point is the advice given by St. Paul to the Colossians, in words similar to those of our text, "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged^b." In truth, we cannot advance a step in the Christian course, without the consolatory promise of pardon and acceptance through Christ, and of the aid of his Spirit: of this we are assured by our Lord himself, in those memorable words, "As the branch cannot bring forth fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me^c."

The Church, regarding all exhortations to a Christian life and holiness upon any other principle as vain and useless, directs the attention of the learner in the first place to that solemn ordinance of which he is already a partaker, and would have him intelligibly instructed as to the nature of the great benefits derived to him by its means. Covenanted blessings naturally require some such ordi-

^b Col. iii. 21.

^c John xv. 4.

nance by which they may be communicated and secured, as by a sealed and irrevocable instrument. Such is our baptism: too often it is true regarded as a ceremony useful only for civil purposes, or a mere ecclesiastical rite, instead of a SACRAMENT OF THE GOSPEL, and such an one, as no fear of a charge of popery ought to deter us from maintaining in its full force and efficacy. Asserting as we do in the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, that the outward sign is an effectual means of conveying the thing signified, to infants absolutely, and to adults upon a *sincere* profession, we are hardly liable to the charge of making the former to be all that is required. Speaking accurately (as we are supposed to do) according to the definitions of the Catechism, which lay it down that a sacrament must consist of two parts, an outward and an inward, both together constituting the essence, the proposition that baptism is regeneration may be inverted, and substituting the definition of the Sacrament for its name, it will stand as follows:—Regeneration is a new birth from sin to righteousness, by which, from having been children of wrath, we are made children of grace, and this benefit is communicated and secured as well as represented, by the outward washing of water in the name of the holy Trinity,

which, as a means and a pledge, derives its efficacy from the institution of Christ. This point however having been controverted, it will be proper to adduce some authorities in its support, and they shall be such as are generally allowed to have some weight upon subjects of this kind. Archbishop Cranmer, the leader of the reformation in our own country, in his Catechism explains the effects of baptism in these words, “ Now learn, I pray you, what God worketh in us by baptism, and what benefits he giveth us in the same; for baptism is not water alone, but it is the water of God, and hath its strength by the word of God, and is a seal of God’s promise, wherefore it doth work in us all those things whereunto God hath ordained it. Wherefore we ought not to have an eye only to the water, but to God rather, which did ordain the baptism of water, and commanded it to be done in his name. For he is almighty, and able to work in us by baptism forgiveness of our sins, and all those wonderful effects and operations for which he hath ordained the same, although man’s reason is not able to conceive the same. Therefore consider the great treasures and benefits whereof God makes us partakers, when we are baptized; which be these. The first is, that in baptism our sins be forgiven us.

The second, that the Holy Ghost is given to us, which doth shed abroad the love of God in our heart. The third is, that by baptism the whole righteousness^d of Christ is given to us, that we may claim the same as our own. Fourthly, by baptism we die with Christ, and are buried as it were into his death, that we should suffer afflictions and death as Christ himself hath suffered. By which, I trust, you understand wherefore baptism is called the bath of regeneration, and how in baptism we be born again and made new creatures in Christ."

Bishop Jewel also, that illustrious champion of the catholic faith against popery, expresses himself to the same purpose: "As princes' seals confirm and warrant their deeds and charters, so do the sacraments witness to our conscience that God's promises are true, and shall continue for ever. They are not bare signs, it were blasphemy so to say: the grace of God doth always work with his sacraments; but we are taught not to seek that grace in the sign, but to assure ourselves, by receiving the

^d These words were probably intended to express our entire *justification* by the pardon of all our sins: we are not bound to take them in the full extent of "an imputed righteousness," implying a perfect obedience, instead of faith. Compare Rom. iv. 5, 11, 25.

sign, that it is given us by the thing signified. We are not washed from our sins by the water; we are not fed to eternal life by the bread and wine, but by the precious blood of our Saviour Christ which lieth hid in these sacraments. The sacrament maketh not a Christian, but is a seal and assurance to all that receive it of the grace of God, unless they make themselves unworthy thereof; and that no man may despise this holy ordinance, and keep back his infants from baptism." Such it appears was the doctrine held at the time of the Reformation. On examining the Articles, Homilies, Baptismal and Confirmation services, we are led to the very same conclusion; and the above quotations will serve to shew that these formularies were not drawn up hastily, but that they express the deliberate sentiments of their compilers, who evidently considered baptism as the initiatory rite by which we are formally invested with all our privileges as believers in Christ: for to be effectual signs they must not only represent, but testify the presence of, the thing signified. Of the baptismal service in particular this may be affirmed: there we find the greatest anxiety displayed by them for enforcing their point, and every form of expression made use of for that purpose; not satisfied with simply asserting it, they have

proceeded to make it the ground work of inferences and exhortations, the subject too of previous supplication to God, and, what is still more remarkable, of subsequent solemn thanksgiving as for a blessing actually bestowed, which it is not to be supposed that men of such acknowledged piety and judgment would have done, but under the fullest conviction entertained by themselves of its certainty.

We should nevertheless be scarcely doing justice to this subject, were we to pass over in silence the grand objection which has been urged, occasionally with unseemly triumph, against this statement, and which indeed at first sight seems materially to affect it.

It is objected, that we do not in general find, that corresponding and suitable effects are produced in those who are baptized. We yield the point, but deny the intended inference; for it should be remembered, that we do not mean to assert that the grace of baptism operates upon us necessarily, as upon inanimate and unresisting matter, or that it will at all excuse us from using our own exertions. We are not uninstructed, that if our talent be retained by us unoccupied, we cannot expect to restore it to the owner with increase, but rather to be deprived of it, and that deservedly. That "God worketh in us both to will and to do,

for the sake of his own good pleasure^b—so far from being an excuse for indolence, is our very motive and encouragement to exertion, and that with diligence, or rather, “with fear and trembling.” It is manifest folly to expect the end if we do not use the means. The initiatory sacrament must be followed up by a course of religious instruction; for how can any one be expected to stir up the gift that is in him, or to call into exercise the powers imparted from above, whilst he is uninformed of their existence. The low estimation in which baptism is held, forgetfulness of the blessings conferred by it, and a want of faith in God’s promise, have moreover deprived the parent of his greatest encouragement, to proceed with confidence, in the work of instruction: and, putting aside cases of wilful depravity in youth, the mere neglect of such instruction is sufficient to explain, why there is frequently so little advantage derived, from the ordinance in question. A feeling of the truth and importance of these points in the minds of parents, would call forth earnest prayer to

^b Phil. ii. 13. *ὅτι τῆς ὑποκρίσεως. causâ.* Schleusner gives no authority for interpreting the preposition by the Latin *secundum*. Had *κατὰ* or *ἐκ* been used, the rendering might have been “*proportionably to,*” which would have destroyed the practical effect of the passage.

God for a blessing on their endeavours to train up their children in the way they should go, and to induce them to walk worthy of their high vocation. Children would not then be taught, as soon as they are able to learn, to idolize pomp and pleasure, and to pay an obsequious deference to the tyrannical maxims of a world, the authority and the evil of which they stand engaged to renounce.

Let the nature of baptismal regeneration, as it is taught by the Church, be properly understood, and the objection is removed. The growth of the divine principle implanted in the soul might be illustrated, by a reference to the gradual developement of the mental faculties; or even to vegetation in the various stages of its progress. The Author of nature himself has directed us to these comparisons. The parables of the grain of mustard seed, and of the leaven, sufficiently indicate the small beginnings, and gradual increase, not only of the external Church, but also of the divine principle in the heart; for, says the same infallible instructor, "the kingdom of God is within you." In like manner there are babes in Christ, as well as such as are of full growth and understanding, and to these, as the name of Christian, so regeneration is not to be denied on account of their not having attained to an

arbitrary standard. **THREE** different stages are expressly marked out in the growth of the plant from the seed : there is first the blade, then the ear, and afterward the full corn in the ear. In the same manner we may trace *three* stages in the developement of the human faculties from the *natural* birth : these are, first, the early dawns of reason in the infant, then the period when the mind acquires its full strength, and can exercise its unassisted powers, and draw its own conclusions ; and, thirdly, the wisdom and experience of age. Now it would appear that the case is precisely similar, in the progress of the divine seed or spiritual understanding, towards perfection. From the first implanting of that seed in baptismal regeneration, there seem to be also *three* distinct stages of progression, in which it displays itself ; commencing with the first appearance of good dispositions in the child, accompanied it is true with much contending, and too often preponderating, evil : this contest is carried on till, by divine grace assisting, the religious principle is enabled to prevail, and to become fixed, when repentance and faith are called into full exercise ; and these together afford a prospect of a harvest to be reaped hereafter, in the fruits of Christian charity and all good works, when

the child of God shall have arrived at his full age, and may be compared to "a shock of corn which cometh in in his season." But further, every husbandman is aware, that the produce of the earth is subject to various impediments, and stands in need of external assistance during its whole progress, and therefore it is not every individual grain that comes to perfection. Omitting to speak of the varieties of soil as not so much to our present purpose, the genial warmth of the sun, the fertilizing dews and refreshing showers of heaven, are essentially necessary to the various operations of nature, and if the seed is by any means debarred of these, the husbandman looks in vain for signs of vegetation. The seed lies buried and inactive; and though it shall sometimes happen that it springs up after a long period unexpectedly, and perhaps by the vigour of its growth overcomes every disadvantage, yet more frequently it is wholly and irrecoverably lost. And have we any reason to be surprised, if the same thing should occur with regard to the principle of divine life in the baptized, through the want of the kindly nurture and admonition of the Lord—an early religious education; and through a neglect of divine ordinances in after life, more especially that

one which is emphatically the soul's spiritual renovation^f? By such negligence, the benefit of baptism is in many cases utterly lost, the seed being as it were buried and choked from the first, or afterwards withered under the blighting influence of indulged passions, or infidel prejudices, aided by the suggestions of satan, and the allurements of a wicked world. Or should we suppose the case not to be thus hopeless, but that by the goodness of God the seed should at length shew signs of life, and the blade appear, yet it may be so late, as barely to allow time for the production and ripening of fruit, ere the sickle be put in to the corn, or the clusters of the vine be gathered in, so as to leave only the uncertain hope that it may be as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done, of which the vinedresser shall say, "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it^g." Far more reasonable is it to expect, that being found at the last barren, or without fruit brought to perfection, it should rather resemble the unprofitable grass "which withereth afore it be plucked up, whereof the mower filleth not his hand, neither he that bindeth up the sheaves his bosom^h." The possibility of such an issue is surely well calculated to impress upon the

^f Tit. iii. 5.

^g Isa. lxx. 8.

^h Ps. cxxix. 6, 7.

mind the necessity which exists, for using the utmost care and diligence in due season, in order that regeneration, which is but the sowing of the seed, may have its perfect work.

Viewed in this light, it is presumed that the opposition which has been raised against this doctrine will appear to have been uncalled for, as no danger is likely to arise of any man placing too much confidence in his regeneration, and becoming secure; except indeed he has imbibed from some other quarter unwarrantable notions of necessary final perseverance. The admission of this leaven, and the neglect, which is occasioned by it, of baptismal regeneration, have made way for the introduction of distinctions, by which the harmony of the Church, considered in the light of a general society, is materially injured, and the improvement of young Christians especially impeded: their natural tendency being to nourish spiritual pride on the one hand, and to cause needless despondency on the other: in conformity with them, we are expected to address one portion of our hearers, as being in the condition of mere heathens, on whom not one token of the divine favour has been bestowed; and the other as those who are arrived at once to the full stature of Christ, and are complete in the possession of every necessary

qualification, whose eternal salvation is already secured and confidently anticipated, and whose obedience is grounded, not on a sense of duty, or the necessity of earnestly striving to obtain the prize of their high calling, but on the principle of gratitude alone, as though it were optional, and might be regarded as a voluntary return for favours receivedⁱ. A system this most decidedly at variance with evangelical^k truth. On the other hand, can any thing be more in accordance with the very spirit and end of the Gospel, than to insist upon the necessity of good works, not merely to exhibit our faith before men, but to secure our own share, enlarged if possible, in the inheritance already provided and freely (though not unconditionally) bestowed, which has been purchased for us by the abundant merits of the Redeemer of us all? If it is objected that the use of the term condition interferes with the freedom of the gift, we may answer by enquiring whether the very right to impose conditions does not necessarily imply, that the reward is of grace, and cannot be demanded of right, but is in the option of the giver to withhold, or to bestow.

ⁱ See a very popular collection of Psalms and Hymns, printed at Cambridge, *passim*; and many others.

^k The legitimate use of this word would very much tend to put a stop to the perversion of it for party purposes.

The promise alone is the ground of the claim, and the performance of the conditions entitles to nothing, but what has been previously promised. Repentance and future obedience would not only be unavailing, but would partake of the sinfulness of the motive, if it were intended by them to supersede the work of the Son of God, and presumptuously to offer them up upon the altar of expiation. Hasty and unfounded charges and accusations may often be left to furnish their own refutation, and be treated with deserved contempt; but the charge of a deficient statement of the doctrines of the Gospel must be met with a direct and positive contradiction, not in a spirit of contention, or from a love of controversy¹, but from an imperative sense of duty, inasmuch as the success of our ministry will in a great measure depend upon the degree of confidence, which is entertained in our ability to unfold the whole counsel of God. The insinuation against the ministers of the Church, that they have forgotten the first principles of the Gospel which they profess to teach, especially when made by those who habitually absent themselves from our ministrations, can only be the offspring of an unusual, and wholly unjustifiable, licence.

I proceed to notice, on the other side, some

¹ See the Rev. H. Budd on Infant Baptism.

considerable advantages, which we derive from a reception of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. A persuasion of its truth tends effectually to secure a due attention to, and proper estimation for, two other very important doctrines, which form an essential part of a truly divine admonition, and are more diligently maintained in the Christian Church, than any others whatsoever. These are, first, the renunciation of human merit, and the necessity of depending solely, in the view of merit, on the vicarious sacrifice of the Son of God : and, secondly, the insufficiency of human powers without divine interposition. With respect to the first of these, let a man be but thoroughly convinced that by his baptism he has been admitted into a state of salvation, and enjoyment of the favour of God; that he has the title to remission of his sins, to the gift of the Holy Ghost, and to every privilege of the Gospel visibly signed and sealed to him in it, and that heaven is become his inheritance unless he wilfully forfeits it; and what place can be found for the vain imagination, that any good works of his own have had a share in procuring for him those privileges, which thus necessarily precede their performance? The thirteenth Article is positive in declaring, that “ works done before the grace of Christ and

the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasing to God," being done upon a wrong principle; yet on that principle they must be performed so long as there is no adequate conception of the nature and effects of baptismal regeneration. In such a case, works will always resemble those which St. Paul excludes from the office of justifying; works done independently of the sacrifice of Christ, and so as to supersede, or interfere with, his prerogative; such are the austerities of the heathen, performed with the uncertain hope of appeasing the anger of the deity, and of expiating sin; such were the painful and laborious rites of the ceremonial law in which the Jew confided, blind to its typical character; such, lastly, were the popish works of supererogation against which our reformers had to contend, all of which must be for ever excluded from the office of justifying, and are so effectually by the doctrine in question.

This point being distinctly maintained, it would appear to be a needless alarm and anxiety, which is sometimes felt because Christian works, done after the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not also excluded, and that too in opposition to the authority of St. James: whose Epistle, if we acknowledge as canonical, and are satisfied at

the same time that no real advantage is to be gained by exalting one part of Scripture to the disparagement of another, we then need no longer hesitate in conformity with his language to speak of justification by works, provided that we make it clearly understood that Christian works are intended, works done upon the express persuasion and conviction, that every thing in the way of merit and purchase is already accomplished, and the divine favour restored by the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ; for these are the works to which St. James alludes. Surely no benefit can be derived from the endeavour to set faith and its natural fruits in opposition to each other, the fountain and the stream which flows from it. If justification by faith implies a renunciation of human merit, justification by the works which proceed from such faith, cannot contradict or overthrow that which is in truth its essential quality. The works which faith produces, ought to be considered in no other light than as extension and further developement of the same principle: for what after all is faith itself but a good work? nor is it quite clear that there was any thing in the sacrifice of Isaac, which necessarily conveyed the idea of merit, more than in believing the promise of God. Do not the words of St. James lead to this

conclusion? How can justification be any other than confirmed and increased, when the faith is made perfect by works? Is there no danger of attributing merit to faith?

It has been observed upon the wording of our eleventh Article, that the opposition there is not between works and faith, but between works and the merits of Christ: and as, according to St. Paul, we are not justified "*propter opera*," so neither indeed are we "*propter fidem*," but "*per fidem*:" in the same manner the Article does not forbid us to assert, in conformity with what is conceived to be the intention of St. James, that we are nevertheless justified "*per opera*:" in other words, though not by works primarily, or indeed at all, as a *meritorious cause*; yet subsequently, and dependently, as a *necessary means*. When the same Apostle puts the question, "Can faith SAVE a man?" there is no reason why we should consider the expression as more comprehensive than that of justification before God; nor can a barren and dead faith be said to justify in any sense. The notion of a justification before men probably took its rise from a passage of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, which the context requires should be differently interpreted. The Apostle's words

▪ James ii. 14.

are these; “ If Abraham be justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God^a,” seeming to imply, that he might glory before men: but considering that St. Paul’s object clearly was to prove that Abraham was not justified (in his sense of the word) by works *at all*, it is probable that nothing of the kind was intended. The meaning of the passage may perhaps be imperfectly expressed as follows. If Abraham were justified by the works here spoken of, if he were admitted into covenant with God on the ground of any antecedent merit of his own, any works of righteousness *previously* performed, (for here is no allusion to the offering up of Isaac,) of such a nature too as to impose an obligation, in that case he would undoubtedly have whereof to glory: and had it been a transaction with any inferior and created being, such a thing might have been admitted—ἀλλ’ οὐ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν—but never surely before the God to whom alone it belongs to justify. How shall the creature render the Creator his debtor, to whom he owes his very being? THEREFORE Abraham is not justified by works. In full agreement with which conclusion are the declarations of Scripture, to which therefore the Apostle at once resorts.

^a Rom. iv. 2.

Respecting the sacrifice of Isaac, there can be no doubt that had it been performed previously to the promise, to atone for sin, and to purchase the favour of God, it had been a work of a far different character from that which belonged to it, when performed in obedience to a God in whom the patriarch believed. Let it ever be remembered, that the notion of human merit is impious and profane, and also totally absurd as involving an essential impossibility; we should be careful therefore how we charge any one in a Protestant country with entertaining it.

But secondly, the doctrine of human inability and the necessity of Divine grace, as it is equally important, so is it equally consequent upon baptismal regeneration. It is very evident that there is no room left for self-sufficiency and self-dependence, when we have been taught to acknowledge that every good desire, even the first motions of the soul toward God and virtue, are the effects of preventing grace, implanted in us in our earliest years, and that we need also the continual help of God's Spirit assisting our own endeavours, that we may be enabled to bring them to good effect. As without this aid we can effect nothing, so here is no opportunity afforded for making the vain experiment. Moreover,

lest the holy Spirit of God should be provoked to withdraw from us this necessary assistance, (which is therefore ° supposed to be granted,) we have warnings as to our obedience, very similar to those given to the Israelites, respecting the angel which conducted them, “Beware of him, obey his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him ^p.” It is true that the degrees of natural corruption are various, and the image of God in which man was created is not wholly obliterated before the sinner’s final condemnation, nevertheless an estrangement from God, and an inability to return to him, are the universal effects of the fall. This we consider a fundamental doctrine, and one which must form a part of a correct religious education, notwithstanding the objections on the score of taste which have been lately raised against it. Further than this, however, Scripture and experience do not warrant us in asserting. The

• Is it not a strange contradiction to assert at one time that man is totally corrupt and destitute of a spark of goodness; and at another, that a man may be virtuous and moral, and almost every thing praiseworthy and excellent, and yet at the same time *unregenerate*? in which case he must possess all those good qualities in his own strength and *by nature*.

^p Exod. xxiii. 21.

belief that man is so corrupt as to be unable to follow the leadings of the Spirit, unless he is forced along by an irresistible impulse, is surely neither necessary, nor conducive, to the glory of God, or to the piety of man. We are apt, at times, to be misled by the apparent plausibility of our motive, and the claim which some have set up to a superior degree of divine illumination, by which their total corruption is revealed to them, is sufficient to compensate the feelings of debasement and degradation, which such a discovery would otherwise occasion. In truth, the pride and self-complacency which such an imagination is calculated to produce, greatly exceed any thing of the kind now to be apprehended from self-righteousness; and it is itself the more dangerous, as it is imposed upon us under the specious pretext of humility, and zeal for the honour of Christ. The mention of this enthusiastic pretence naturally leads us to notice an additional advantage to be derived from a conviction of the efficacy of Baptism, seeing it would furnish the most effectual means of preventing any one from falling into those doubts and perplexities, as to the secret counsels of God, which are the necessary accompaniments of a system of exclusive favouritism. The Church, in her Catechism, early instructs children to consider themselves as of the num-

ber of the elect, and that the Spirit of God, is engaged in sanctifying them as such; and she prays that they may continue in this state unto their lives' end. She calls their attention to this point, for the useful practical purpose of exciting gratitude to God, for having thus called them "to the knowledge of his grace and faith in him," for having placed them in a state of salvation, and given them the necessary means and opportunities of making this "their calling and election sure." The Christian is thus taught to view his enjoyment of Gospel privileges as a state, to which, by the goodness of God in the disposal of his lot, he was originally predestinated; and, so long as he continues in that goodness, to look to Heaven itself as the kingdom prepared before the foundation of the world for all those who love God and obey the Gospel; and in a certain degree prepared for himself, even as the prize is prepared for all who are called to run the race. He is the more encouraged to entertain this hope, because he finds himself even now actually placed in a state of education and preparation for the attainment of it: and when appalled at the view of his own frailties and imperfections, even in his best moments, he takes comfort in the assurance that they were all known to God from the first; and in the words

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of one who has been styled the most judicious¹ divine of modern times, "he finds his hope confirmed, and his devout affections enlivened, by the unalterable nature of the divine intentions." And this consideration ALONE can afford him solid support in his last hour, however great may have been his attainments in holiness and virtue, and whatever consolation he may properly derive from reflecting upon them.

In conclusion ; it will, I trust, be scarcely necessary to remark, that there has been no intention, by any thing that has been said, to detract in the slightest degree from the importance of moral instruction ; so far from it, it must ever be maintained, that the most perfect acquaintance with doctrines, and the greatest zeal in defending them, will not in the least excuse a man from the practice of Christian virtues. In order to perfect that practice, an increasing acquaintance with the holy law of God must be diligently sought, which he will write in the hearts of those who call their faith into exercise, and labour in the use of means for that purpose, and pray to him continually. The ministers of religion too will not be acting in obedience to the commands of

¹ Vide Dr. Hey, in loco.

Christ, nor duly fulfilling their trust, unless they devote a considerable portion of their public instructions to explain, and enforce the practice of, moral virtues. Care should also be taken by all who engage in the work of education, that the morality which they inculcate be the enlarged and improved morality of the Gospel, and that they give a due prominence to those virtues which are preeminently Christian, and are most essential to happiness and concord, such as humility, charity, sincerity. A far different system is too often allowed to pass current in the world, one which, being founded in selfishness, will (as occasion serves) admit of artifice and cunning, of pride and resentment, inculcating extravagant notions of honour and independence, and under an assumed courteousness sometimes concealing a murderous disposition. Let these opposite systems be exchanged in daily life, and then in any season of danger and alarm, as great a difference will be experienced, between the thoughtless defiance and presumptuous boldness of worldly heroism, and the reasonable courage and humble confidence of the Christian—of the dignified exercise of which latter virtues royalty has not long since furnished an example^r. While how-

^r See Sir H. Taylor's interesting memorandum of the last illness and death of the Duke of York.

ever due attention is given to moral subjects, doctrinal instruction must by no means be neglected, especially in an age when it is attempted to be maintained, that every man ought to be left free to form his own religious opinions, and to be secure from all enquiry respecting them, though we have it upon the authority of St. John, that there are times when even the common rights of hospitality must be refused, upon the ground of a deviation from sound doctrine^{*}. The enquiry at the present time seems to be not which is the *true* doctrine, but which is *liberal*; not which is scriptural, but which is charitable: and we see those very points which have always been considered essential and fundamental articles of faith, in danger of being reduced to mere matters of opinion, and the appellation of Christian claimed by some of the worst enemies of Christianity.

It may perhaps be worth while to enquire, how far this state of things may be leading on gradually to the fulfilment of our Lord's prediction respecting his second coming, "When[†] the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on

^{*} 2 John ver. 10. The principle of the injunction is the main thing to be attended to.

[†] Luke xviii. 8.

the earth?" But, whatever we conceive to be the interpretation of these words, the necessity of diligence in the appointed pastors of the flock will be found to be the same, both in enforcing the belief of doctrines, and in seeking to obtain from them their practical effects; while there is no way in which their labour can be more usefully employed, than in making provision, that the rising generation may be brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In using our best endeavours for each of these purposes, although a pharisaical separation from the world is not to be commended, yet the various important duties of our profession cannot well be satisfactorily performed by such as suffer much of their time to be absorbed in the gay circle of fashion, and in a round of frivolous amusements; while their duty to God, whose servants they profess themselves to be,—to the Church, of whose honours and emoluments they partake, and to the souls committed to their care requires them to be resident upon their charge, and supplying the spiritual wants of the people. It certainly becomes us, with our present privileges, to exhibit the same zeal and diligence, which would be absolutely necessary, were the Church again left to depend under God upon its own resources, and deprived of the temporal assist-

ance which it now enjoys. Instead of this, however, when we look into its past history, and consider it also in its present increasing usefulness, strength, and prosperity, we shall rather find abundant cause to "thank God, and to take courage."

THE END.

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.

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JA 21.

**THE NECESSITY OF A DECENT CELEBRATION OF
PUBLIC WORSHIP:**

7

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN THE

CHAPEL OF ST. DAVID'S COLLEGE.

BY THE

REV. ALFRED OLLIVANT, M.A.

FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE;

VICE PRINCIPAL OF ST. DAVID'S COLLEGE;

AND CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S.



LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. & J. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,

AND WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL;

DEIGHTONS, CAMBRIDGE; PARKER, OXFORD;

AND REES, LANDOVERY.

1828.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY R. GILBERT,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

TO THE
STUDENTS OF ST. DAVID'S COLLEGE,

This Sermon,

COMPOSED FOR THEIR BENEFIT,

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY

THEIR FAITHFUL FRIEND AND SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

A

S E R M O N,

&c.

1 COR. XIV. 40.

Let all things be done decently and in order.

THE Apostle in these words is speaking of the celebration of public worship. It appears that some abuses had crept into the Corinthian Church, in consequence of the improper exercise of the miraculous powers, with which the first preachers of Christianity were endued. In the chapter before us he gives directions for the due regulation of this particular, and having touched also upon some other points of discipline concludes with the admonition which has just been read.

It is evident that while the case which called for his interposition, could only happen in the first ages of the Church, the general principle of his command is applicable to every period. We may therefore consider it in this discourse for our own benefit and instruction. Whatever point the Apostle

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thought it necessary to insist upon in a matter of such importance as the regulation of public worship, is clearly such as to demand an attentive examination. And it is observable, that he is not speaking on this occasion, as he sometimes does, his mere opinion as *a man*, but delivering by virtue of his divine commission a commandment from the Lord. “ If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you, are the commandments of the Lord.” Should it appear then to any one that this is an uninteresting topic, and but ill suited to spiritual edification, let him consider this declaration of the Apostle, before he presumes to censure. And we may be permitted in faithfulness to say, that there appears a particular necessity for the discussion of it in this place, partly from our own circumstances, as the object we have in view is the furtherance of true religion, and therefore nothing is to be neglected which can conduce to that end ; and partly from the habits of those among whom our ministry is exercised, who seem to have forgotten at least the Apostle’s precept, and practically to overlook the connection between the form and the spirit of religion.

In the consideration of the subject before us we will direct your attention in the first place to the command of the Apostle, and show the principles upon which it is founded. We will then

endeavour to point out some particulars to which the general direction may be applied.

In the first place then to consider the command itself; we may be sure that it is founded upon such principles, as to make compliance with it our interest as well as duty. For such is the case with all the commands of God. And when we are persuaded that an injunction comes from him, though the reason of it were like his own nature wrapped in obscurity, which man's comprehension could not penetrate, we might rest satisfied with the simple declaration; "Thus saith the Lord." But where the command has respect to such things as come within the compass of our faculties, it is our undoubted privilege to use them, and the result of our enquiry will in all cases be, that the command is consistent both with our own nature and the eternal fitness of things.

That such is the case in the matter before us, will require no laboured argument to show. We shall see at once the propriety of the command, if we reflect upon the object we have in view when we meet in the House of God. It is in one word to worship him, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, and before whom even the angels veil their faces. It is to adore the infinite Majesty of God; to humble ourselves in his presence, to acknowledge our whole dependence upon his bounty, to abstract our thoughts from what is seen and temporal, and

to fix them upon what is invisible and eternal ; to explore the mysteries of redemption, to commit ourselves afresh to the Providence of God, to expect the communications of his grace ; to unite our prayers with those of our brethren who are scattered throughout the world, to mingle our praises and songs with those of the angels before the throne.

It is evident that objects such as these demand the utmost seriousness and the greatest composure of mind. To suppose that we can accomplish them while our thoughts are distracted with other things, is plainly to expect an impossibility. We must come before God with a due solemnity of feeling, and while we are in his presence, we must labour to preserve it, if we would receive a blessing at his hands. Now there is nothing that has a greater tendency to solemnize the feelings, and bring the heart and affections to a proper tone in religious worship, than the preservation of decency and good order. It gives an air of seriousness to every thing that is done, prevents the distraction of the thoughts, and prepares them for a holy and heavenly direction. Being itself in unison with the employment which we have in hand, it acts as an auxiliary in the cause, and instead of multiplying the hindrances to devotion, which, owing to the corruption of our nature, are sufficiently numerous, it rivets our attention to the main object, quickens our zeal in the

service of God, and helps to speed us on our way. And on the other hand nothing is a greater obstacle to the success of social worship, than the prevalence of confusion and disorder. While it stirs up the latent evil of our hearts, it distracts and unhinges our thoughts, and by preventing us from serious reflection destroys the whole benefit that might otherwise be gained.

But in addition to this it bespeaks a levity and want of reverence, which ill become the occasion and place in which we are. When God appeared unto Moses in the bush, he commanded him to put the sandals off his feet, "for the place on which thou standest is holy ground." And surely it may well be deemed an insult to the Majesty of Heaven, when we act in God's immediate presence as if we were engaged in any ordinary occupation. Were we summoned before a fellow-creature, whose character and rank entitled him to our respect, it would be difficult to divest ourselves of the feelings to which they would naturally give rise. And were we so thoughtless as to forget our comparative insignificance, we should be justly reproached for our folly by men of better judgment than ourselves. How then can we forget the infinite distance between man and his Creator, and put aside those feelings of awe, which it ought ever to inspire? And though it be true, that God is every where present, we are certain that he is so in a special

manner in the assembly of his people. He is beautifully addressed by the Psalmist as the God that inhabiteth the praises of Israel, and we have the assurance of our Lord to the same effect. “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

It may be urged perhaps by some in extenuation of the evil which we are anxious to condemn, that “ God is a spirit,” and that “ he is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth.” And this, as it is the grand discovery of revealed religion, is a point which should ever be kept in view. But while we allow it to its utmost extent, as respects the spirit of the worshipper, we disclaim any inference that can be drawn from it to the disparagement of good order in the mode of conducting worship. It is true that the body without the spirit is a lifeless corpse, but to imagine a spirit without a body, which it may inhabit, is to conceive of a state of things inconsistent with our present condition. “ There is one body,” says the Apostle to the Ephesians, “ and one spirit.” We should ever recollect that man is a compound creature, consisting of body and soul ; and that it is chiefly through the medium of the former that any internal impressions are produced. Were we purely spiritual, we might justly disclaim those helps to devotion, which it is capable of affording. But such unfortunately

is not the case ; so far from it, that unless we avail ourselves of the proper means to counteract the evil, the impressions produced upon our senses will greatly retard our progress, and prevent the spirit from soaring upwards in the contemplation of heavenly things. It is therefore our wisdom to bring them into subjection by proper discipline, and make them subservient instead of opposed to our spiritual improvement. And there is nothing that has a greater tendency to effect this, than the maintenance of propriety and order ; when a sober and exalted piety gives life to the decent ceremonial in which it is embodied, and is itself invigorated in return by the union between the two.

And of this there cannot be a better proof than that which experience affords. Who has not felt the chilling and fatal influence upon his own mind of irregularity and disorder in public worship ? We have entered the courts of the sanctuary with some feelings of devotion and aspirations for greater holiness and a more lively sense of divine things. But our thoughts have been dissipated by what has passed before our eyes, and we have returned disappointed and unimproved. And who again has not experienced the cheering and enlivening effect of social worship, when conducted in a manner becoming its high importance ? How often has the unbeliever been convinced by a spectacle so imposing, the penitent confirmed in his repentance, the weak

disciple strengthened, and the established Christian filled with joy and peace in believing? The Apostle in the chapter before us contrasts the different effects, which would probably be produced in an unbelieving mind by the sight of a Christian congregation, according to the mode in which their worship was conducted. "If," says he, "the whole Church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." The Apostle is obviously speaking in these words of a mode of worship peculiar to the primitive ages; but we feel assured that the same effect will still accompany the ordinances of God, when they are celebrated with becoming reverence, and the same evil consequences attend them, when we intrude into his presence with unhallowed familiarity. Of the first of these at least we have a striking instance in the description given of his own feelings by one who was but lately an unbeliever in Christianity, but is now a minister and an ornament of our Church. "An accident," he says, "(if any thing which leads to results so important can be so called,) made me

in an idle moment look into Paley's Natural Theology, which lay upon a table. I was struck by the author's peculiar manner and style. I borrowed the book, and read it with great interest. Feelings of piety toward the great Author of nature began to thaw the unnatural frost which misery, inflicted in his name, had produced in a heart not formed to be ungrateful. It was in this state of mind that, being desirous of seeing every thing worthy of observation I went one Sunday to St. James's Church. The prayers, though containing what I did not believe, appeared to me solemn and affecting. I had not for many years entered a church without feelings of irritation and hostility but here was nothing that could check sympathy, or smother the reviving sentiments of natural religion, which Paley had awakened. It happened that before the sermon was given Addison's beautiful hymn—

‘ When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.’

“ At the end of the second verse my eyes were streaming with tears ; and I believe that from that day I never passed one without some ardent aspirations towards the Author of my life and exist-

ence*." The description here given affords so practical a commentary upon the Apostle's words, and at the same time so lively a proof of the efficacy possessed by our own liturgical services, in producing the conviction of which he speaks, that it can scarcely need an apology to have introduced it to your notice.

Let us pause here awhile and consider the conclusions at which we have arrived. We have seen that the command of the Apostle has its foundations in the objects of public worship, and the very nature and constitution of man; so that in fact its principles are laid in the relation we bear to God, and the obligation we are under to use the best means in our power to fulfil the duties of that relation. We have seen further, that while we are called upon to offer a spiritual service, attention to external propriety is so far from being a hindrance to that end, that it is in truth an important help and subsidiary in the cause. We therefore proceed in the second place to apply the command to ourselves, and consider in what particulars it affords a direction for our own conduct. In doing so we will arrange the remarks, that suggest themselves, under two heads—*first*, considering it with reference to the minister; and, *secondly*, the people in general.

* Rev. Blanco White. "Evidence against Catholicism."

With respect then to the minister, it is obvious that his whole manner and deportment should be consistent with the seriousness of the occupation in which he is engaged. Nothing can be conceived to be more at variance with the principle of the text, than any levity of conduct in a character so sacred, and at such a time and place, as when he is ministering at the altar. "Be ye clean," says the Prophet, "who bear the vessels of the Lord." And surely nothing can be more calculated to prevent ministerial usefulness, and to frustrate the best intentions of benevolence, than a want of decorum under such circumstances. It is true that outward decency will be but a pitiful substitute for the true spirit of piety; but it is nevertheless an essential point. The maxim of the heathen poet is true of the Christian minister. If he wish to make others serious, he must first be serious himself; for we are naturally susceptible of impressions from what we see and hear, and we easily catch the feeling of which we witness the active operation.

It would be wandering too far from the particular subject of this discourse, were we to dwell upon the argument which this consideration supplies, for maintaining a strict superintendence over the whole habit of our lives, that when we enter upon the actual discharge of our ministerial duties, we may not be assuming a constrained and unnatural character, but acting only in accordance with our-

selves. It may suffice therefore to have suggested the thought, and to leave it to your own reflection to improve.

We may notice further, as an application of the Apostle's command, the propriety of strict attention to the appointments of the Church. This indeed seems particularly implied by the language of the text—"Let all things be done decently and *in order* *." By the word, which is rendered order, we do not simply understand that which is orderly and becoming, but *the appointed order* and constitution of things; for so the word is literally to be interpreted. But even if it were not so, the obligation might easily be deduced from the general principle. For every deviation from the prescribed and beaten track in matters such as these, has a tendency to confusion, and therefore is justly to be condemned. It may be perfectly true, that the point upon which *we* choose to deviate, may be indifferent in itself. But who is to say where the deviation is to end, when once it has begun? If *we* in the exercise of *our* discretion consider *one* point indifferent, another by virtue of the same may form the like opinion of something else; and thus we may be deprived of one point of discipline or observance after another, till the different congregations of the Church have little mutual resemblance

* Πάντα εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν γινέσθω.

but in name. Nor is it an unfounded apprehension that we entertain, that if this liberty of judgment were permitted to each with respect to the *ceremonies* of religion, we should soon ascend a higher tribunal, and summon the doctrines also to our bar : the result of which would be, that reason would be substituted for revelation, and Christianity reduced to a system of human invention. Besides which it should ever be remembered, that although we may not see the reason of every particular, it does not necessarily follow that no reason can be given : it may be our own short-sightedness or ignorance that is in fault ; and sad would it be, were we to consider *that* a sufficient cause for inflicting a wound on any thing so important as the due celebration of the worship of God.

Allied to this is the duty of so conducting the service as to make it answer the end, for which it was designed. We may mention in particular a distinct and articulate method of reading the holy Scriptures, and a simple and fervent habit of prayer ; so that the Liturgy of our Church may not appear a matter in which we ourselves are uninterested, but as the fittest channel of utterance for the holy aspirations and devout feelings of our own hearts. It is one of the peculiar excellencies of our Church service, that it is so copious in its selections from holy writ. Whatever else we hear or do *not* hear, we are certain to have many sen-

tences of God's word brought before our notice. How then can *he* be said to be a faithful minister of the Church, who is too indolent or careless to break the bread which she has thus enjoined him to dispense? How can *he* acquit himself of offering an insult to the Author of that sacred volume, who reads the revelation of his will as though it were an idle tale? Besides which it should be remembered, that many of the poorer members of our congregations depend wholly upon what they *hear*, and *that* only upon one day in seven. Being themselves unable to read they have no other access to the lively oracles, than that which is opened to them in the house of God. Great then must be the guilt and responsibility of those, who, for want of diligence and pains, are unqualified to minister in this particular. And with respect to the prayers of the Church, it is obvious that the same principle applies. When we are actually engaged in addressing ourselves to God, nothing can be more indecent than to shew by the carelessness of our manner that we are offering only the service of the lip. Would we faithfully discharge our office as ministers of the Church, we should *pray*, and not merely *read* the petitions which she has put into our mouth; we should endeavour so to employ them, that the affections of the people may be stimulated, and yet chastised by the pure and sober piety which breathes throughout them all. In

order to accomplish this we should avoid, on the one hand, every thing that bespeaks levity and indifference; and, on the other, whatever approaches to singularity and affectation. We should so present them to the mind of the hearer, that he may immediately forget the symbol that is employed, and his thoughts recur at once to the thing signified. Our delivery therefore should be distinct and simple, our emphasis correct and natural. We should neither fatigue our hearers by too great rapidity of utterance, nor weary them with unnecessary slowness, nor damp the ardour of their devotions by a dull and monotonous cadence. In short, we should labour by every means to awaken and preserve attention, remembering that God's house is especially designed to be "*a house of prayer*," and that much blame will attach to ourselves, if through any fault of ours its peculiar character be overlooked.

And here we may be permitted in faithfulness to express our regret, that so little value appears to be placed by those among whom our lot is cast, upon the Liturgy of our Church, which one who is well calculated to judge, though she cannot number him among her sons, has not scrupled to designate as "the first of uninspired compositions." Who shall presume to say how much of this evil is attributable to the negligence of those, who had spontaneously undertaken to defend her cause—or how soon

or how extensively it may be retrieved, if proper diligence be used? Let us strive, brethren, by God's help, to avoid every thing that borders upon party spirit, and do nothing from strife or vain-glory; but if we call ourselves the ministers of the Church, and if we profess to entertain the conviction that she is upon the whole best calculated to preserve the integrity of the Gospel, let us at least be consistent with our profession, and shew that we have a lively sense of the vows which we have made.

It would be easy, did time permit, to enlarge upon this point of the subject, but we will only notice, that every act of the minister, which is deficient in respect of order and propriety, will quickly find its counterpart in the conduct of his people. It is not enough therefore to say that he intended no evil. If his conduct do not prove the purity of his intentions, he is responsible to its full extent for the mischief that will result.

But we will now consider a few particulars in which the principle of the Apostle's command is applicable to the people at large. And first we may notice the propriety of a punctual attendance at the stated hour of prayer. The Apostle in this chapter observes, "God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." Now it is needless to remark how much confusion is occasioned by a want of attention to this parti-

cular. How we interrupt the devotions of others, when we break the silence and stillness that should prevail. Besides which, the service itself is so arranged, that we can be absent from no part of it without suffering a loss ourselves. The several portions are ordered each with reference to the rest; and it is not for us to presume that any one is needless, or to be neglected without a cause. It is but *once* in the service that we formally *confess* our sins: it is but *once* that we are comforted with the assurance, that God has commissioned his ministers to pronounce absolution to those who repent and believe. And both of these are at the commencement of the service, to teach us, no doubt, that we are in ourselves unfit to cross the threshold of the sanctuary, and that it is only in the language of contrition that we can approach "to lay hold of the hope that is set before us." He then that neglects this opportunity, virtually disclaims the necessity of confession and absolution. He does not feel that he is a sinner; he has no occasion to lament that he has "left undone the things he ought to have done, and done the things he ought not to have done, and that there is no health in him." And therefore he needs not the cheering assurance that "God willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live." It may be remarked here by the way, that in order to ensure this punctuality

in our people, it is absolutely necessary that we be punctual ourselves. We cannot expect them to come to Church at an uncertainty. Unless therefore we have a stated time, and are rigid in its observance, we do in fact expose them to the temptation, and create the evil which we ought to cure.

It need scarcely be mentioned that our conduct when we *are* assembled, should in all respects be marked by decency and reverence. If our eyes are wandering, our thoughts will wander also, and soon be fixed upon something else than the worship of God. If our lips are opened, let them be opened only for the purposes of prayer and praise. "The Lord," says the Prophet, "is in his holy temple, let the whole earth keep silence before him." Under this head we may notice especially *two particulars*; in the first place, the propriety of joining in the service by making the responses when we are desired so to do; and, secondly, of assuming such a posture as becomes the employment in which we are engaged. No wonder that the service appears long and uninteresting to those who take no share in it themselves, who never bring a Prayer-Book with them to Church, or never use it, if they do. It is by means of the responses that we appropriate the service and petitions to ourselves; that we make it an act of social worship; that we enjoy the communion of saints; that our united prayers "ascend up as incense before God;" and that "the

lifting up of our hands is as the evening sacrifice." And with regard to the proper attitude for prayer, we are far from contending that any one is essential to its own nature, or indispensable to its acceptance, but when we consider the infinite distance between ourselves and our Creator, when we reflect upon our unworthiness contrasted with his holiness, when we remember how distinctly it is stated of our blessed Lord, and *that* on several occasions, that "he kneeled down and prayed;" we do not hesitate to express our conviction that decency and order require us to follow his example, and that it is in itself more becoming to worship God upon our knees; not to say that we are more liable, if we stand, to have our attention directed from its proper object, and our thoughts distracted by any trifle that meets our eye. It is in accordance with this feeling that our Church has enjoined this posture when we receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, "for a signification," as she says, "of our humble and grateful acknowledgment of the benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy receivers, and for the avoiding of such profanation and disorder in the Holy Communion, as might otherwise ensue."

There are but a few passages of Scripture from which we may form any notion of the mode of adoration in the other world. But those which there are, may well impress us with the thought

of the majesty of God, and the fitness of a humble posture to shew the feeling of our minds. Thus we read in the prophet Isaiah, " I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory, and the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke." In the book of Revelation also we find it mentioned, that " All the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God; saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever."

In conclusion we make the *general* remark, that it is the duty of the people as well as of the Clergy to attend, so far as they can, to the positive directions of the Church. It is an universal truth that " the powers that be, are ordained of God ;" and the same principle that leads us to the neglect of these injunctions, would justify, by parity of reasoning, disobedience to the commands of our temporal governors. It is not enough to say that in the one case there is a penalty attached, and in the other none.

For the Christian knows that he must "be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake." And surely we have in this respect but little reason to complain. Unlike the Jewish dispensation, that imposed a yoke upon its disciples "which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear;" the Christian religion is spiritual in its own nature, its prime injunction being that we should worship God in spirit and in truth. But we have seen that in order to attain that end, it is necessary to clothe the spirit of religion with somewhat of external decency and form; and it has been the wisdom of our Church to preserve a happy mean between the two extremes, of indifference on the one hand and superstition on the other; "being content," as she herself declares, "with those ceremonies which do serve to a decent order and godly discipline, and such as be apt to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God by some notable and special signification, whereby he might be edified." Such moderation on her part should call for a double measure of submission on ours. We should thankfully acknowledge the privilege we enjoy of worshipping within her pale. And be assured, brethren, that the more we advance in spiritual religion, the more thankful shall we feel for this happiness, the more gladly shall we acquiesce in all the ordinances of her appointment. The value which we place upon her offices will furnish

no bad test of the character and state of our own minds ; and if we really acquire their *spirit*, and make them the models of our lives, we shall doubtless find their consoling influence at that solemn hour, to which we are all approaching, when the shadow will be lost in the substance, and all differences of opinion upon minor points will be absorbed in the contemplation of eternity, upon the brink of which we have actually arrived.

NOTE.

“ IN the time of Divine Service, and of every part thereof, al due reverence is to be used : for it is according to the Apostle’s rule—‘ Let all things be done decently and according to order ;’ answerably to which decency and order we judge these our directions following:—No man shall cover his head in the Church or Chapel in the time of Divine Service, except he have some infirmity ; in which case let him wear a night-cap or coif. All manner of persons then present shall reverently kneel upon their knees, when the general Confession, Litany, and other prayers are read ; and shall stand up at the saying of the Belief, according to the rules in that behalf prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer ; and likewise when in the time of Divine Service the Lord Jesus shall be mentioned, due and lowly reverence shall be done by all persons present, as it hath been accustomed ; testifying by these outward ceremonies and gestures their inward humility, Christian resolution, and due acknowledgment that the Lord Jesus Christ, the true eternal Son of God, is the only Saviour of the world, in whom alone all the mercies, graces, and promises of God to mankind for this life and the life to come, are fully and wholly comprised. None, either man, woman, or child, of what calling soever, shall be otherwise at such times busied in the Church, than in quiet attendance to hear, mark, and understand that which is read,

preached, or ministered ; saying in their due places audibly with the minister the Confession, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed, and making such other answers to the public prayers as are appointed in the Book of Common Prayer : neither shall they disturb the Service or Sermon, by walking or talking, or any other way ; nor depart out of the Church during the time of Service or Sermon, without some urgent or reasonable cause."—*Eighteenth Canon of the Church.*

THE END.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY R. GILBERT, ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

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S. H. 1828.

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR FRIENDS, WHO
ARE THE FRIENDS OF JESUS. 0

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF
GREAT GRANSDEN,

IN THE COUNTY OF HUNTINGDON,

On Sunday, April 6, 1828, being Easter Sunday,

AND THE

First Anniversary

OF THE

UNITED FRIENDLY SOCIETY,

AFTER THE DEATH OF

THOMAS LANTAFFE, BUTCHER.

By JAMES PLUMPTRE, B.D.

VICAR OF GREAT GRANSDEN, AND FORMERLY FELLOW OF
CLARE HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

HUNTINGDON:

PRINTED BY THOMAS LOVELL;

And Sold by T. Lovell, Huntingdon; Townsend, St. Ives; Emery, St. Neots;

William Smart, Gransden, and by Thomas Stevenson, Cambridge;

By C. and J. Rivington, St. Paul's Church-yard, and Waterloo Place, and

J. Hatchard and Son, Piccadilly, London.

1828.



THE RESURRECTION OF OUR FRIENDS, WHO ARE THE FRIENDS OF JESUS.

JOHN XI. 11.

Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.

1. WHEN the Son of God came from Heaven to this world, upon his visit of mercy and salvation, we hear but little of his intercourse with the great ones of the earth, of sumptuous entertainments and splendid spectacles, but we have accounts of many visits of great simplicity, but of great interest, which he made to the meek and the lowly. Of the unpretending friends of our Lord none excite our interest and our regard more than a small family who resided at Bethany, consisting of a brother and two sisters, whose names were Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary. The first that we hear of these is from St. Luke, who, x. 38—42, says, "Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her, therefore, that she help me. And Jesus answered, and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

I must not occupy the time with the various important considerations that arise out of this short, but interesting history; and, indeed, it is the less necessary,



now, as I have so often, and so largely, dwelt upon them before; that, I trust, they occur to your own minds as I read the story, that *the care of the soul* is the "one thing needful," and that *listening to the word of Jesus* is "that good part" which we must not suffer to be "taken away from us." Here, however, no mention is made of Lazarus: but St. John, at the beginning of the eleventh chapter says,

"Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore, his sister sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God; that the son of God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard, therefore, that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. Then, after that, saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again. His disciples say unto him, master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But, if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth*, but I go that I may *awake* him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he *sleep*, he shall do well. Howbeit, Jesus spake of his *death*: but they thought that he had spoken of taking *rest* in *sleep*. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, *Lazarus is dead*. And I am glad, for your sakes, that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe: nevertheless, let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him. Then, when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already." (Now Bethany

was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.) And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that, even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, *Thy brother shall rise again.* Martha said unto him, I know that he shall rise again *in the resurrection at the last day.* Jesus said unto her, *I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.*"

Jesus here calls himself THE RESURRECTION and THE LIFE, because it is through HIM that man will *rise from the dead*; and those who receive him as their Saviour will *live for ever* in the blessedness of heaven. And this he effects by a divine power residing in himself. Jesus said to the Jews, John ii. 19, "Destroy this temple," it is said, verse 21, "he spake of the temple of his body."—"and, in three days, *I will raise it up*." Again, John xi 17, 18, he says, "Therefore, doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me," that is, against my will and consent,—“but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and *I have power to take it again.*” And, in respect to *us*, he said, John vi. 40, "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and *I will raise him up at the last day.*"

Jesus then is truly THE RESURRECTION, and THE LIFE. And he said to Martha, (verse 26) "Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. And, when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As



soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. "Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then, when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus, therefore, saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come, and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused, that even this man should not have died? Jesus, therefore, again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. (It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.) Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time, he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid.

"And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou has heard me: And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And, when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth.* And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him."

This narrative is at once so simple, so sublime, so beautiful, and so affecting, that it would have injured,

and not have improved it, to have added any explanations or paraphrase. I have been led to the choice of it *this day*, partly as being suitable to the great subject of the day, *THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE,—the life to come*,—and partly on account of the presence of the members of *The United Friendly Society* at their Anniversary,* and who, eight weeks ago, this day, attended together, in this church, upon the corpse, and stood as mourners round the grave of one, whom they and I called *our Friend*. *Our friend sleepeth,—sleepeth in death*. Not indeed in a *sleep* from which we expect to see him awakened, and raised to life again in this state of things; but He who raised Lazarus from the sleep of death, hath said, John v. 24—29, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word; and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For, as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done *good* unto the resurrection of *life*; and they that have done *evil* unto the resurrection of *damnation*.”

This is an awful, an all-important alternative! And how may we think that it stands with *our friend*? Did *he* so *hear the word of Jesus*, and *believe on Him that sent him*, and so *do good*; that we may reasonably trust he “hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life?” A short review of his life, as the remainder of our time may allow, will, I trust, convince us, that we “should



* The yearly feast of the Society is on Easter Monday, and the Society meet in the afternoon of the day preceding, and walk in procession to the Church to attend divine service.

not *sorrow* as those which have *no hope*:" (1 Thea. iv 13): but rather "*rejoice in hope*." (Romans v. 2. xii. 12.)

II. Our friend THOMAS LANTAFFE was born in the neighbouring parish of Croxton, on the 21st of December, St. Thomas's day, 1779. His parents were most respectable. His pious widowed mother lived among us for many years, and died, a few years since, at a good old age. So long as her health permitted her, she was constant in her attendance upon the ordinances of religion, at Church and Sacrament. Our friend was brought up wholly by his father, (who kept a school, and was besides steward to Edward Leeds, Esq., and clerk to the Justices of Peace in the neighbourhood)* except that he was for one quarter of a year at a boarding school at St. Neots, when at the age of 14 or 15.

His turn was always for *books*. But, being of a delicate constitution, and it being judged that a confined and sedentary occupation was not advisable for him, he was put apprentice to a *butcher*. I have heard him say *what* it was that determined his father and himself to an occupation which seemed so little suited to his natural disposition; but I do not recollect the precise circumstance: I think it was his father being intimate with a very respectable person in that business at Cambridge. He was put apprentice in February 1797, and continued till April 1801; when he came to this parish, to set up in his business, and to live with his sister and her husband and his mother. But he was unable to begin his business at first, on account of ill health, weakness of constitution, and a spitting of blood. He began, however, in the August of that year.

I myself came into this parish at Lady Day 1812, under circumstances of some difficulty. It will be remembered by many of my hearers, that the Vicarage House was in a ruinous state; and being obliged to repair it at my own expense before I could inhabit it,

* Mr. Thomas Lantaffe died February 26, 1798, aged 62 years. Elizabeth, his wife, died May 11, 1822, aged 79.

I lodged for some time in the house of the brother-in-law of our friend, and spent the first year between this place and Cambridge; and, as Thomas was then, for the most part, at leisure on a Monday morning, he often drove me a part of the way to Cambridge. I could never sit side by side with any one without entering into conversation with him, much less with one so civil in his manners, and so intelligent in his mind. Our conversation, therefore, was, from the first, free and unrestrained; and the Bishop of the Diocese being about to hold a *confirmation*, my mind naturally turned to that, when I found that he had not been confirmed. This brought us at once to religious conversation, when I found that he was well "instructed to the kingdom of heaven." Pleased with goodness wheresoever I should find it, and more pleased, perhaps, to find it where I should least have expected it,—I, from that time, entertained a great regard for him; and which I had never any occasion to alter. Whom should a clergyman most regard, but the best of his flock? Who should a Christian Minister respect the most, but those who most honour God and Christ? Who should he love the best, but those who best love God and his blessed Son?

He had begun to take a religious work, published monthly, called *The Christian Guardian, and Church of England Magazine*, in the year 1810; and, as it had then been published a year, he bought up the numbers of the former year, and continued to take this to his death. He had then several good books besides.

The Bishop held his confirmation at St. Neots, on the 19th of May, and Thomas drove me to St. Neots the day before, on my way to Buckden, to be instituted to this Vicarage; and the next day I met the Bishop and the persons of my parish who were to be confirmed. I had then but four. Of these one was one of the Churchwardens, at the age of 61, and another *Thomas Lantaffe, the Butcher*, aged 32. He began to take the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, the Easter following; and, after that, very rarely failed of being a Commu-



nicant. He was, without exception, the most constant in his attendance at Church of any in the parish ; on his knees always at the prayers, and an attentive listener to the word of God, whether read or preached.

There being no *Friendly Society* in the parish when I came to it, and thinking that one would be of great advantage to both the individual members and the parish at large, I mentioned the subject to him, and he directly came into it, and did all he could to promote it. One was established at Michaelmas 1812, and our names are *printed together* in the Book of the *Rules*, as the *first Stewards* of the Society. It continued in a flourishing condition, and conferring a great deal of benefit, for *ten years* ; when a few of the members, who had, for some time, been unpleasant, proposed the breaking it up, for the sake of dividing the money. This was one of the few occasions upon which my friend and myself thought differently. I was for getting the refractory members excluded, as they had made themselves liable to it, by the very proposal to break it up, and for the rest to go on by themselves. He was for letting them have their way. The Society was dissolved, with the consent of the Magistrates, at the Quarter Sessions, and the consequence was, that *two* new ones were immediately formed, but upon different principles. *The one now present* is that which *he* was the chief person in forming : his name is printed in the Book of the Rules, as one of the first Stewards ; and I have no doubt but that every individual member looked upon him as a *friend* and *brother*.

On my coming into the parish, there being no Sunday School, I proposed to establish one ; but not being able to get any assistance, I was obliged, for a time, to relinquish the idea. Wishing, however, to give some young men, who had missed their opportunity of learning to read, a fresh opportunity for that purpose, I resolved to do what I could myself in the parish, and, besides catechising the children, I proposed attending at the school-house, on a Sunday evening, to instruct the young men, when Thomas *requested* that *he* might attend ; and

his example had great influence in bringing many of all ages to improve themselves in reading. When I began this, I proposed only that it should continue till such time as a Sunday School could be established, which it did, and for about a year and a half after; in all, a period of about two years and three quarters, when I was obliged to give it up, finding the fatigue too much for me.

The Sunday School was established at Midsommer, 1814, in commemoration of the Peace, when Thomas Lantaff gave a yearly subscription to it, and constantly gave his personal assistance in teaching the children; and this he continued for eleven years and a quarter, till Michaelmas, 1825, when he went out of the parish for half a year.* On his return, some altered circumstances, and the fatigue he found in teaching, made him not resume attendance at the School.

It was, I think, at his suggestion, that a Book Society was established in the parish, in August, 1813, in which the members met once a fortnight, and paid sixpence each. The money was laid out in religious and useful books, which went round to the members, and then were divided among them. This continued for about six years and a half, when the members being reduced to three, it was, by their mutual consent, dissolved. First and last, there had been eighteen members in all, and upwards of 497. subscribed, with which 236 books had been bought, circulated, and then divided among 18 persons, or families; so that much good was done, we will hope, not only at that time; but, likewise, will be to all, who now, and in time to come, shall make use of the books.

Persons not used to books, and not fond of them,

* To Potton. But he did not find it succeed. While there, he attended upon the ministry of the Rev. Richard Whittingham, the worthy Vicar, three times on the Sabbath, of which he spoke with great delight. In a letter to a friend (which has been lent to me) written during this period, he says, "My Sundays are past very comfortably. I go to Church three times. At night I very much like to hear Mr. Whittingham. His Discourse last Sunday night was on making conscience of our thoughts."

wonder what amusement people can find in them, and, much more how, they should be fond of them. But books are *company*, and *good* books are *good* company. In good books we have the best thoughts of the best men, expressed in their best manner. Man in his fallen state has a corrupt nature, and this shews itself, in most men, in some unpleasantness of *temper*. Few men can converse long with another without shewing something of this ; and many shew much of it at once. But this does not shew itself so much in the *writings* of men : most men suppress it there, and appear in their best humours : he is a bad man indeed, who writes down his bad thoughts, and sends them abroad into the world. Hence good books are, in general, delightful company, enjoyed when we please, and for as long, or short, a time together as may be pleasant and convenient. He who cannot amuse himself with a book is dependent upon others, and upon the humours of others, for his amusement ; and to obtain that, he must often be at a great expense in eating, drinking, apparel, and time. But he who can amuse himself with *books* has inexpensive company. In *them* he can get into company which his rank in life would otherwise keep him out of ; nay he can in them converse with all the wisest and best persons of all times and all countries. In **THE BOOK, THE BIBLE**, we converse with all the Prophets, the Evangelists, the Apostles, and even with **CHRIST**, and **THE HOLY SPIRIT**, and **GOD**. Wonder not, my friends, that *Thomas Lantaffe* was fond of books.

And this leads me to another part of his character, his love of **THE BIBLE SOCIETY**. He, who knew the value of **THE WORD OF GOD** to himself, was anxious that all others should partake of it too ; and was always delighted to hear of the progress of it in the earth. He was a member of the Committee of our Caxton Branch Society, and usually attended the Anniversary of that and of at least two others in the neighbourhood, and was always a contributor at each. In fact no measure was ever proposed to him, which seemed to be for the

good of the parish or the public, but he was willing to forward it to the best of his means and his abilities.

But I must be drawing towards a conclusion. To come, then, to his more personal and private character.

Though a *butcher*, an occupation which is generally thought, (though I think unjustly) to lead to cruelty and coarseness, he was singularly *humane* and *gentle*, both towards man and towards brute beasts *. There was in his manner a *civility*, without *servility*, and an ease and frankness, without familiarity, that was truly pleasing. The great excellence of his character was plain good sense, and a right way of thinking upon subjects, arising from right principles. I was always happy to *know* his *opinion* on any subject, though I might not think it advisable to follow it. In some unpleasant and trying disputes in the parish, (particularly trying to *him*, situated as he was in respect to *both* parties) the *evenness* with which he conducted himself was admirable. Had all in the parish been like him, indeed, there would never have been any disputes at all. I never myself heard, and I have never met with any one who had said he had heard, a bad word proceed out of his mouth : and it should be mentioned, to the honour of himself and of others of his profession, that he told me some years ago, that, at the ordinary, at the public house at Cambridge, where he put up on a market day, at which eight butchers and two tanners, besides other persons, were occasionally present, they had a rule, that whoever made use of an *oath* should forfeit *sixpence* ; and that, in upwards of a year, he had never heard but one oath



* It was with a view of assisting Thomas Lantaff, and of promoting humanity among Butchers, and in the world in general, that the writer of this Sermon, assisted in his turn by T. L., compiled "THE EXPERIENCED BUTCHER: shewing the respectability and usefulness of his calling, the Religious considerations arising from it, the Laws relating to it, and various profitable suggestions for the rightly carrying it on: Designed not only for the use of Butchers, but also for Families and Readers in general." With Seven Plates, price 6s. Sold by Harvey and Darton, Gracechurch-street. The circumstances which gave rise to it, are related in the Preface. In the Author's Drama of "The Salutary Reproof, or The Butcher," various traits of the character of the Butcher were taken from T. L.

sworn there, and that was by one who did not usually dine in the room.*

The same may be said, I believe, of his *sobriety*. His business led him much to public houses, and he was peculiarly circumstanced, having no house of his own, and his shop and offices being at a distance from the house where he lodged, the nearest public house to his business was a sort of *home* to him, yet I never saw him intoxicated, nor heard of his being so. It would have been well, if all who met with him in the public house, had copied his sobriety. His late hour of being home from market, on a Saturday night, obliged him, *as he thought*, to be in his shop, for a short time, early on the Sunday morning. He used to express his *grief* at this: and I have thought, and wished, that he might have ordered it otherwise; but it never interfered with his being in good time for morning church; and, for many years, at an earlier hour, at the Sunday school.

His constant journeys to Cambridge with his cart on a market day, gave him many opportunities of obliging persons, by taking them, or bringing them home; by taking or bringing parcels, and by executing commissions, at which he was most ready, and attentive, and trusty: to this I can speak most decidedly, and may say truly, that *he was as trusty as oneself*. In his dealings he was honest and punctual.

With a character thus high for morals and for piety, it might be asked by a stranger, perhaps, Was there no spiritual pride, no self-righteousness, no setting up of himself, and despising others? Nothing like it. In all the conversations I have had with him, I never observed any thing of this kind; and, though he was firmly, and from principle, attached to *the Church*, he had no bigotry in his composition, and valued a good man of whatever denomination he might be. It happened, that during the greater part of his last illness, (the breaking of a blood vessel, and a general decline) I was myself

* At the Black Swan, in the Butcher Market, at Cambridge, kept by Mr. Smith.—See the Experienced Butcher, p. 18. Note.

ill, and unable to get out to see him ; and, when I was able to go, I was myself so poorly, and he, from his cough, so unable to speak much, that but little conversation took place between us. He expected, I believe, that his illness would end in death ; but did not seem to apprehend that his end was so near. The last time I saw him,* he had just had a bad fit of coughing, and it was not advisable for him to speak much, so I used the service for the Visitation of the sick, in which he joined with great devotion ; and I left with him *An Address to Persons in Sickness*, a little tract published by the Religious Tract Society, which I understand he afterwards read : he had already got Stanhope's Prayers and Meditations for Sick persons. We shook hands at parting, but I little thought it would be the last time I should see him in this world.

But, though I am not able myself to give much account of his thoughts and views in his last days, yet it is with great satisfaction, that I am enabled to state, that, but a short time before his end, he pointed out to a pious friend a passage in a book which he said suited particularly his own case. This book is called *A Golden Treasury for the Children of God ; consisting of Select Texts of The Bible, with practical observations in Prose and Verse for every day in the year.*† The one he pointed out is that for *April the 27th.* *The Texts of Scripture* are these.

“ God be merciful to me a Sinner. (Luke xviii. 13) Look upon my affliction and pain, and forgive all my sins. (Psalm xxv. 18.) The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion, and of great mercy ; the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. (Psalm cxlv. 8, 9.) Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. (Matthew ix. 2.)”

The practical observations are these :

“ JUSTIFICATION, or remission of sins before the tribunal of God, and the comfortable assurance of it in

* Monday, January 28. He died the Sunday following, Feb. 3.

† By C. H. V. Bogatzky.

the heart, do not always go together. The pardon is passed in heaven at once, and in the most perfect manner: yet the sense of it may be wanting; for the assurance of that pardon is mostly given by degrees, as believers are able to receive it. Feeble glimpses appear now and then; and many tokens usually pass between Christ and a believing soul, before the Spirit gives a full and clear witness to his conscience. Therefore a penitent soul must converse much with the Gospel, and pray continually for more light, and a greater degree of faith and peace."

The verses, or hymn, are these,

God of mercy, hear my call,
My load of guilt remove;
Break down this separating wall,
That bars me from thy love.

Give me the presence of thy grace:
Then my rejoicing tongue
Shall speak aloud thy righteousness,
And make thy praise my song.

A soul, oppress'd with sin's desert,
My God will ne'er despise;
A humble groan, a broken heart,
Is our best sacrifice.

We may, then, entertain *a hope*, AN ASSURED HOPE, that *our friend* was THE FRIEND OF JESUS; and that, at the general Resurrection in the last day, he will rise again at the voice of the Saviour to EVERLASTING LIFE.

May we so follow his example, and improve upon it, that, together with him, we may rise to the life immortal; and, through faith in the Saviour, may live, together with him, in the everlasting blessedness which God hath prepared for those who love him.

FINIS.

HUNTINGDON:

PRINTED BY T. LOVELL.

J. H. 1828.

**THE PRINCIPLES OF UNION IN THE CHURCH OF
ENGLAND; CONSIDERED**

IN

A CHARGE,

DELIVERED TO

The Clergy

OF THE

ARCHDEACONRY OF LONDON,

AT A

VISITATION

HELD MAY XII, MDCCCXXVIII.

BY THE

VENERABLE J. H. POTT, M.A.

ARCHDEACON OF LONDON,

AND CHANCELLOR OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF EXETER.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CLERGY PRESENT.

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR C. & J. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,

AND WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL.

1828.



Printed by R. GILBERT, St. John's Square, London.

TO THE REV.

THE CLERGY

OF THE

ARCHDEACONRY OF LONDON,

THE FOLLOWING

Charge,

NOW MADE PUBLIC AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS INSCRIBED,

WITH EVERY CORDIAL TESTIMONY OF ATTACHMENT AND REGARD,

BY THEIR FAITHFUL SERVANT,

J. H. POTT.

CHARGE,

&c.

MY REV. BRETHREN,

WHEN we are here met within the walls of this sacred structure, set apart and dedicated to the worship of the Lord our God, and for the fellowship and communion of the Christian household, what things can more fitly occupy the mind than those which are most nearly connected with the source and privileges of our Christian calling, and with the special and peculiar obligations which attach to us as partakers of one ministry?

In order to reduce these objects to some chief heads or principles, our thoughts are naturally led to regard the Church itself in its complex character; the congregation or collective number in each district of its visible communion; and the consecrated edifices constructed for those joint assemblies. The Church, the congregation, and the courts of worship, are things of different account, if taken

severally, but in their joint subsistence the lesser borrows value from the greater, and each stands entitled to our best care and attention as tending to one end, the glory of God and the salvation of the souls of men.

The present call, and the occasions for it, will favour such expressions of our joint concern. It appears, I trust, that these objects are placed before us not as speculative matters, but as things brought near to our best feelings; things which are most at heart with us. That such is the case, I can readily collect from the punctual attendance which for some years I have had the happiness to witness in this place; an attendance, though not merely voluntary, yet not commonly enforced by stricter motives than those which are, indeed, the strongest and the best, the sense of duty, and the ready inclination to fulfil it; without which all other ties, though fortified, as in this case, by legal sanctions, would prove weak and ineffectual.

Our first reflections on the heads proposed, will lead us at once to perceive, that it would form but a narrow scheme and defective notion of the Christian Church in any land, which should establish its intrinsic character and perpetual claims upon the formularies of its public service, or upon its peculiar standard of confession, in such respects wherein for special reasons, in order to meet emergent errors, or to prevent them from arising, some conclusions of consent and harmony have been so properly adopted. We should render an imperfect and in-

adequate description of the Church to which we belong, if we did not look to its primary foundations, and pay the first regard to that which is essential to the being of the Church wherever it exists. Thus its union with one Everliving Head, and its undivided fellowship where its congregations are collected, rise at once before us.

I shall not dwell long in general statements of the topics I have chosen, for there are peculiar circumstances in each of them, to which I would fain crave your attention. But what is, indeed, of chief moment, shall be touched with a due regard to its importance, which cannot be too highly rated. I shall remind you, then, that the union of the Church, which consists in the relation which its members have to one Head and to each other, is described by our blessed Lord in few words, in which he sets before us this first source of life and privilege. "I am the vine, ye are the branches,"—said our Redeemer, and we need no further definition of the first essential character of the one Church Catholic, in things by which it has its being, which are not subject to the senses, but are built upon everlasting and unchanging grounds of vital interest.

The next step is to the congregation. To that religious fellowship, we trace the joint performance of all common offices and duties, which serve for mutual benefit and are conducive to the welfare of the whole. Without its visible communion, the Church could not flourish, since by such means its

noble confines are enlarged, its encrease cherished, and the succours of its promised grace supplied. Such benefits flow there by settled methods of conveyance, and are dispensed through their appointed channels. This fellowship, or collective concourse of the Christian congregation, will also find its pattern as briefly and sufficiently described in one line of the sacred Scripture. Thus we learn that the first collective number of the Christian household "continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer." We have here the threefold tie of faith, discipline, and worship, even in the highest form of concord and communion. All of these, we must next remark, imply the care and office of the public and commissioned ministers in their respective ranks, as we find them in the age of the Apostles, appointed under their provision, and secured by their direction. The ministerial charge extends expressly to such things; for which reason the first witnesses of Christ became the foundation stones (together with the faith itself which they professed) upon which Christ declared that he would build his Church. Their powers were distinctly given in our Lord's commission, extended as it has been by those who first received it, to those whom they constituted in the same behalf. Great and eminent were the privileges of our Lord's Apostles, and their gifts. What they witnessed, and what they put in writing for our learning, had the sure seal of inspiration.

But what was peculiar to them, cannot be taken to defeat their own scheme of discipline and order, or to destroy the pattern which they left.

Having touched the first bonds of union in the Church, and in close connection with it, the sacred ordinances and their ministrations in its visible communion, I will add but one word to these preliminaries,—it is this,—that from the first publication of religion in the world, and of the Christian faith in particular, there has been an uniform acknowledgment of the right of sovereignty in every state. This right was founded upon the common principles of equity and reason which pervade the universe. The principles of order, unity, and public peace, cannot subsist without good government; and no good government, whatever be its form, can be without its right of power, its sanctions, its sources of authority, and its last resort. If these should be so divided as to constitute the strange anomaly of two heads for one body, two forms of power and independence without union or subjection, the government would be plainly open to distraction. What is merely spiritual belongs no doubt to the spiritual office: and where God hath spoken, must derive its sanctions from his word. If this be what is meant by independence upon human authority, the plea is good. What is merely civil, belongs as clearly to the civil power, according to the ground of what must be provided to secure the foundations of society in this world. Our Lord marked this also in a single

sentence, "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's." But in things where these considerations come to be united, and who can sever them where man is the subject of them—man who has one mind and one conscience for things sacred and things civil—in such mixed concerns, both kinds of government must concur to make their ministrations serve the public good. Where also this concurrent rule is subject, as it ought to be, to one sovereignty, there we may well say that the supremacy, for control in all things to which human power is competent, rests where Providence and Nature have designed it should. It rests where the word of God, expressed in many testimonies of prophetic promise, declared it should rest. It rests upon the pattern of the Old Israel, in things not limited to one peculiar jurisdiction. It rests upon the natural inherent right of every government. It rests where the laws of this land have so expressly placed it. The promise that the powers of this world should exercise that fostering care which the kings of Israel used, points then most plainly to national conversions, and to national communions. It is not possible to break the force of this conclusion, by looking back to less perfect stages of the Christian Church, before the promised pattern was complete. Would you give the preference on such grounds of primitive example, to the pattern of our Lord's little flock, before those who were to be its future pastors had received their commission, and before he had pre-

scribed the sacred ordinances of his Church? When collected round his hallowed person, they wanted nothing; they had all things; but are we for this reason to return back to that first image of the Church, and to reject the word of promise for the manner of its future settlement in all lands?

I touch these things briefly; I have treated of them heretofore more largely in this place. I touch them now, because my thoughts are next to be directed more particularly to the congregation, which in Christian states derives much of its privileges from the ground thus laid.

The congregation; what is it but those parts of the Church of Christ which in Christian countries are severed only in their seasons of assembly, because all cannot meet together? In such assemblies did our Lord and his Apostles exercise their ministries. It is there that, from the first admission to the state of grace, the several advances in that progress, which has its stages of proficiency, are made good. It is there that the covenant of faith and duteous service is renewed, with every tender of that reasonable sacrifice in which the soul and body form together the joint oblation of the whole man. And what are the connecting bonds of union for the congregation? What but the threefold ties before named, doctrine, discipline, and worship, as they are acknowledged and adopted by the public voice in one land. Thus the collective congregations, and the national communion, stand together; nor can they be divided without

a manifest and open schism, on whichever side the fault of such division may be found to lie; and where human prudence must have some share in public regulations, if things be but tolerable, who would forego the end itself in all its chief particulars, for the sake of points of smaller moment? Who can do this and be blameless? In the days of the Apostles the first indications of a dividing spirit, were seen in factious singularities, before they brake out into more decided separations. It was no formed schism, but a partial spirit, which made some cry out for Apollos, and others lift the voice for Paul; against which faulty temper the Apostle urged that generous remonstrance, "was Paul crucified for you?" reminding them of that only name by which they could be saved. But if the ground of concord be well laid in the national communion, every tendency to separate will easily be met by the calm answer which was given by our Lord's Apostle to contentious persons in his day; "we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God;" which shews plainly that they were subject then to one rule.

When what were deemed to be higher measures of improvement, were sought after in this land by forsaking the common bond of fellowship; when this was done for the sake of favourite opinions or of no less favoured usages, which, whatever judgment might be formed about them, stood apart from the main foundations of the faith; how desperate was the blow! It destroyed at once

the ties of a visible communion in one land. It cancelled all the peaceful forms of social worship, and dissolved the happy concord of religious ministrations in one nation. The strife too was excited after so much had been done to cast out all material errors from our borders, that St. Paul's grave and ever memorable rule might well apply, "Brethren whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

The congregation then, is the lively image of the Christian Church—Nay more, it is a part and portion of it; which is something far beyond resemblance. It is the collective company of that which in our land should constitute one body of believers under its appointed pastors, divided only in its places of assembly from the nature and necessity of things; but one in faith, in spiritual concord, in doctrine, discipline, and worship.

A strange device it was, and unhappily it was one which found its first abettors in this land, that the first sees in Christendom were confined to single congregations. Upon this construction of the spiritual government, there were those who professed a readiness to own episcopacy which before had been so bitterly opposed. For this purpose every nerve was strained in order to confine the Church in early ages to such single flocks. But it soon appeared that it was against all records of historical tradition, that the cities, states, and regions where Christianity was first planted, should

each of them have but one church of assembly; or if there were more, that each church for that reason should become a diocese, with the several ministerial orders and degrees, (which on this condition were acknowledged) bounded to that limit. The large companies, reported with the clearest testimony of the public apologists for the faith in ages next to those of the Apostles, could not be so circumscribed. The vast numbers of Christians in the cities of Antioch; of Rome with its dependencies; in the cities of Syria; in Ethiopia and Africa, with the regions of the western world, could not meet respectively in single congregations. They were bound, indeed, in their several dioceses to one altar of communion. One church and one altar, was the constant language of antiquity*. But they who used it, never dreamed that one congregation could constitute the collective body of believers in one city, state or region; or that when congregations should be multiplied, the single altar in that town or district would cease to be the centre of episcopal communion or control.

This conceit, however, that each several congregation, when so formed, became at once a new see, was put forward with the greatest boast of full research. The remotest corners of the Christian world were traversed for examples, and the registers of Councils were pressed into the cause. It called forth in reply an accurate, extensive, and indubi-

* See Note II., subjoined to this Charge.

table mass of testimonies, collected from all times from the first age down to that in which this singular opinion was put forward*. This plea was so baffled that it may seem to be of little use to revive the mention of it, but in speaking of the congregation, and having yet to speak of the sacred edifices multiplied for its reception, I could not persuade myself to pass in silence a scheme once urged with so much vehemence. The attempt thus made to produce the suffrage of antiquity against diocesan episcopacy in any larger form than a single congregation, was just similar to that attempt concerning which I last addressed you in this place with reference to baptismal privileges. In both instances the grounds of early usage were explored with the same eagerness, and with as loud a shout of victory. In both cases too the streams of learning were opened as a sluice upon those twin fictions of an hapless age. It was urged that through episcopal ambition, the larger sees (for it could not be concealed that there were such) had swallowed up the less. But it came out in proof beyond all power of contradiction, that the case was exactly the reverse. It was the ambition of the Arian heretics, and the Donatist dividers, which in fact had contrived to multiply the smaller sees, until that course was checked by canonical

* See "A Defence of Diocesan Episcopacy," in answer to a book of Mr. David Clarkson, lately published, entitled "Primitive Episcopacy," by Henry Maurice, D.D. London, 1691.

restraint*. But the project to which I have alluded was soon turned most fatally against its own inventors, to the utter ruin of their classical assemblies, and the downfall of their discipline. The bold independent took the signal, and in the strictest sense made every congregation which he gathered, a Church sole and absolute.

Mark well, my Rev. Brethren, what the grounds are for maintaining union and agreement in our land; they are laid where the Church, the congregation, and the national communion shall subsist together.

Above all things I shall now entreat you to consider with me, since the means are but for the end, what the moral and religious benefits will be, where those ties of communion to which our views have been directed, are maintained. The manifold advantages to which I now allude, are to be sought in the gradual growth and just degrees of stature in the Christian life. A desultory notion of religion, the increase of which is not, in ordinary cases, to be traced from the first bud and the early leaf, to the firmer texture of the fruit, is not that for which the Christian Congregation and its salutary ministrations were provided. The greatest injury may happen to the cause of moral and religious improvement in the world, if we consent to substitute capricious and imaginary tests for the standing and perpetual grounds of faith and duty.

* See Note I., subjoined to this Charge.

and for the salutary influence and operation of religious culture. Nothing can be more clear in all the scheme of grace and all the dispensations of religion, than this—that their blessings were designed for men and nations, for families and households, for states and communities, for settled Churches which should have within themselves every needful means for training many sons to glory.

To this just arrangement, with which the voice of nature joins its suffrage, the provisions of the Christian Church have in all times been decisively adapted. Nothing surely can be more consistent with God's universal care for those who were first made partakers of his image, nothing can be more just, more beautiful, or better suited to our common nature, than the regular provision which takes up the reasonable creature from his infancy; which secures his first adoption to the state of grace on fit terms of stipulation; and which supplies from thenceforth every needful succour and encouragement for the dutiful; with every healing remedy after days of error or misdeed, for the penitent. Let it not be thought that this reflection is so obvious that it might have been spared at this time. It well deserves severe attention. The great necessity for weighing heedfully such measures of advantage, arises from the disposition so common among men, which inclines them to neglect and undervalue that which they possess. The light of truth and the means by which it is dispensed, are too frequently as little noticed as the

sun which enables many to pursue their daily occupations without one glance cast upwards, or one thought of Him who is the source and giver of all light. And what is more strange, if after days of folly and transgression, men grow wiser, yet there are some who venture to depreciate the first sources of religious discipline and culture, by regarding which they might have shunned the rocks from which they have escaped so hardly. They may well be thankful for the happy breath of wind which enables them to work their way back from devouring perils, but the first thought should be to deplore the folly of neglecting those means by which such evils might have been avoided—means expressly calculated for that end.

It remains for me to remark, that the same attachment to the fellowship of those with whom our lot in life is cast, will now lead me to invite your further notice and attention to the sacred edifices which are set apart and consecrated to the service of Almighty God.

By his power and essence, God is present every where; and by his efficacious influence he may visit, with peculiar marks of favour, the courts of worship and the fixed assemblies of his household. Thus may he “bow the heavens and come down,” when he exhibits such present tokens of his favor by the signs and symbols of his grace.

The promise of the Lord, in whatsoever way it might entail its good effects upon collective companies of Believers in any age, is as clear a promise

as language can convey, for the congregation in its hallowed places of assembly. It is there that the joy and blessedness of such bonds of communion find their sanction. It is there that the suit is urged with all the force which united efforts of the mind and soul can furnish. Let us not forget at any moment of our ministry, that with the visible marks of covenant with God, the Christian life takes its beginning. The access is thus given to the state of grace, and to the communion and relations of the universal Church; and from thenceforth in any settled place of their abode, how careful should we be to admonish men to keep their station, and to respect their privileges in the congregation in its appointed places of assembly. How else shall they take a proper share in its religious exercises? Is it a small thing for them to keep their part in the privileges of the Christian household, to frequent their own place allotted for them in the hallowed courts of public worship and communion? Is it a small thing to come into the Lord's house where he deigns to bestow his special benediction, with the choicest pledges of his love; to appear as the freed-men of that community; to turn to such doors even as they seek a Father's threshold, and approach the honored house in which they are most welcome? The argument which our Lord used against the profaners of the Temple in his day, was manifestly drawn from the fixed appropriation of the sacred edifices. On this head it has been well observed by the prudent and justly venerated Mr.

Hooker, that “ the solemn dedication of Churches doth not only serve to make them public, but for this end also, to surrender up that right which otherwise the founder might have in them, and to make God himself the owner.” He observes too, “ that the argument which our Saviour uses against profaners of the Temple, he taketh from the use whereunto it was with solemnity consecrated : and as the Prophet Jeremy forbiddeth the carrying of burdens upon the Sabbath, because it was a sanctified day, so because the Temple was a place sanctified, our Lord would not suffer, no not the carriage of a vessel through it. Christ would not suffer that the Temple should serve for a place of mart. When therefore we sanctify or hallow Churches, that which we do is only to testify that we make them places of public resort ; that we invest God himself with them ; that we sever them from common uses *.”

When the Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed, it was not to signify the termination of the public worship of the Lord. Such solemnities shall never cease ; no, not in the realms of glory. But the overthrow of that sumptuous house, served sufficiently to mark the folly of those who had preferred the marble columns of the Temple, to the everlasting pillars of the Truth itself. It served also to denote the rising of a Church whose congregations should be multiplied in all lands, and would accord-

* Hooker, Eccles. Pol. book v. sect. 12.

ingly require its hallowed courts of worship, not in one place, but wheresoever the collective numbers of believers should be gathered.

We may observe now that after days of persecution in the first ages, when for any little term of respite the companies of Christians could meet more safely, and could make public declarations of their faith, they thought no more of building crypts for their assemblies. It was no longer an upper room, or a subterraneous vault, which they provided; and even when they had no better places of assembly, they bestowed the best cost they could upon them, and were sometimes taunted for it.

The very learned Mr. Mede, in an elaborate discourse, traces the appropriation of places for Christian worship through the three first centuries, with copious testimonies, and full answers to objections. He remarks, that, "the number of Christians being so great that their ancient fabrics were no longer sufficient to contain them, they erected new and more spacious ones in every city, from their foundations. These sacred edifices, Dioclesian, and those other surrogated Emperors (which contained that direful ten years' persecution began by him) commanded by their edicts every where to be demolished, as we may read in Eusebius at large; the like whereunto seems never to have happened in any of the former persecutions, in which they were only taken from the Christians, but restored unto them again *."

* Churches, that is, appropriate places for public worship,

The churches of the Christians, when they found a little calm, rose fast. Evaristus, Bishop of Rome, in the early part of the second century, he who suffered martyrdom under Trajan, is supposed to have been the first, who, finding the multitude of converts to be too great to assemble in one place, however ample, assigned their stations and settled the bounds for the congregations over which he presided. But this design was left imperfect by his martyrdom, until the reign of Gallienus; when Dionysius encouraged by a propitious edict made in favour of the Christians, resumed the work. The designation of "Tituli," applied to churches, appears to have been made in the days of Marcellinus, when no less than four-and-twenty of them are said to have been established in Rome. If doubts have been raised concerning what has been referred to, Marcellinus; yet Baronius gives an earlier date to what has been assigned to that age. This is certain, that many churches were built long before the days of Constantine and the fixed term of imperial favour. Thus we read distinctly in Eusebius *, of

both in and ever since the Apostles' times, &c. by Joseph Mede, B.D. &c. London. 1638. He concludes—"And thus I think I have proved by good and sufficient testimonies, that the Christians had Oratories or Churches, that is, appropriate places for Christian worship, in every of the first three hundred years." Adding, "Who can believe that such a pattern should not invite the Christians to an imitation of the same; though we should suppose there were no other reasons to induce them, but that of ordinary convenience."

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 8. chap. iv.

the demolition of such churches in the reign of Dioclesian, and among these of the great church at Tyre, which was afterwards rebuilt by Paulinus; of the consecration of which we read, when the bishops of many distant Churches were collected, in order to mark the unity and correspondence of the Christian Church as well as to add splendour to the celebrations of that day. There are few things on record more striking or remarkable than the eloquent oration * which was composed, it is thought, by Eusebius himself; in which he exhausted all the stores of rhetoric, and displayed at full the common sentiments which glowed then in every Christian breast. The Churches which succeeded when the kingdoms of the world became the kingdoms of the Lord, were beautiful and spacious. They were calculated, and accordingly divided, for every class of Christians. The font was placed there for those to be first dedicated to the Lord by baptism, who kept their places on the forms of well-instructed scholars as they advanced in riper stages of proficiency to the table of Communion. If much of these forms of distribution in the ancient churches is now disused, yet something is retained. The portion of the church, toward the western end, once used for the instruction of children, is in some instances so occupied in our own land, both in Sunday Schools, and Weekly Schools, to the present day. We have now, indeed, most

* Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. 10. chap. ii. iii.

thankfully to contemplate more suitable accommodations, which have been furnished for such purposes. By the national provision, rightly so denominated, and happily established in all parts of the land, the congregations of our country will be suitably replenished from their seed-plots, subsisting as they do in such circles of religious culture and instruction. It is thus that they who have been trained to learn and to repeat the form of sound words, and the elements of Christian truth, may know how to hear the preacher's word with profit, and how to take their part with readiness in the public exercises of religion. A greater blessing has not been conferred upon the land since the happy era of the Reformation, when the Parish Schools began to rise, and in this great city more especially.

We may observe now, that it was most fitting and becoming that in every Diocese there should be a central edifice, the chief seat of the See. These were placed in cities, and sometimes in smaller towns and villages, of which we have had instances in our own country. Many might resort to those distinguished churches for ministerial dispensations, although the building could not hold all comers if assembled at one time. Increasing numbers rendered it more necessary to build churches for parochial congregations. Long before the separation into parishes, attributed to Honorius, who presided in the See of Canterbury in the seventh century, "we read in the British times," says a good author, "of an appropriation of diverse churches, with their

endowments to Dubritius, archbishop of South Wales, under the Britons, as is collected by Mr. Selden out of a very ancient manuscript of the first state of the Church of Llandaff: adding ingenuously thereupon, though it made something against his own propositum, *that no doubt can be but that churches were built here in those times, neither is it to be conceived how Christianity could in any nation be much ancients (if generally received, or by any number) than churches, or some convenient houses, or other places in the nature of churches, appointed for the increase of devotion*.*"

Evident it was, however, in all cases, that there was no departure by such new provisions, from the single altar of communion, or the seat of spiritual jurisdiction †. Impossible it is, when such considerations rise before us, not to pay another debt of gratitude, with a just acknowledgement for the measures taken in our day by the Legislature of our country for providing for the exigencies of its fast increasing population. The means for their assembly and accommodation in our consecrated buildings, have been happily augmented, and with a more particular attention to the poorer classes of the Christian household. Much has been done, much is doing, and will it may be hoped be further done, to meet necessities which became so importunate, and to apply the needful remedy to mischiefs which were every where increasing.

* Staveland's History of Churches in England, p. 65.

† See Note II., subjoined to this Charge.

If the first churches in the Christian world were large and noble, it was not for the sake of viewing distant pageants and processions, that they were so constructed. Such things have unhappily been substituted for the simple forms of religious fellowship in public worship and communion. But the consecrated edifices of the earlier ages were raised for the purposes of prayer, for joint exercises of devotion, for the ministries of the word and sacrament. Nor was it possible that such benefits could be enjoyed with any orderly decorum, or with the becoming forms of an united service, without multiplied and convenient places of assembly, dedicated to such uses, and adapted to the joint communication of large portions of the Christian flock. The same offices are kept in view in our own Courts of Assembly, and most strictly should they be guarded from needless, and much more from unbecoming, deviations from the main design.

And here, my Reverend Brethren, I might close these observations, having already trespassed much upon your time, and touched what relates to leading principles, about which we have most cause to be vigilant and careful.

There are many more particulars which might be applicable to the subjects which have been set before you. I might call now upon the wardens of the churches in this city, to exercise their best care in maintaining in their pristine form and beauty, those sacred edifices which subsist among us. I have not burdened them as yet with parochial visitations. In a country district once committed to

my care, I held such visitations at no distant intervals; but the necessity for such inspections is not here perhaps so pressing. In this metropolis there is for the most part, (there always should be) a regular attention to stated periods of repair, and for the renewal of those embellishments by which such buildings are adorned. If I have hitherto preferred giving a personal attendance (and I have always given it most gladly) in cases where it has been called for, rather than by parochial visitation through the district, it has been because (for the reason above mentioned) conference and counsel may be preferable where they can be found sufficient, and because the cost and labour, which would be considerable, in many instances would be found unnecessary. Where authoritative interference becomes needful, it shall not be wanting; but it must be where a departure from the good custom to which I have alluded shall have obtained; and I trust that there are none here that would willingly endure that scandal with relation to the charge for which they are entrusted. Should the course which I have not yet adopted appear to be more necessary, I shall readily pursue it. Yet I feel persuaded, my Reverend Brethren, that I shall not have occasion to provoke you or the wardens of your churches to jealousy by producing the warning of the heathen poet for the purpose of reproof.

“ Delicta majorum immeritus lues,
Romane, donec templa refeceris,
Ædesque labantes Deorum.”

But I will detain you no longer than may suffice now to express my best thanks for your patient hearing : and to assure you that it is my heart's desire at such times to satisfy my own incumbent duties, to which I have been encouraged so frequently, nay so kindly and so uniformly, by the prompt attention which I have experienced at your hands.

may be preferable where they can be found sufficient, and because the cost and labour which would be considerable in many instances would be found unnecessary. Where authoritative intelligence becomes necessary, it shall not be wanting ; that it may be where a departure from the good custom to which I have alluded shall have obtained ; and I trust that there are none here that would willingly endure that scandal with relation to the charge for which they are entrusted. Should the course which I have not yet adopted appear to be more necessary, I shall readily pursue it. Yet I feel persuaded my Reverend Brethren that I shall not have occasion to provoke you or the wardens of your churches to rebuke by promulgating the warning of the Christian post for the purpose of reproach.

NOTES.

NOTE I.

THE remarks of Dr. Maurice on this head, in a certain instance, may serve here for an example.—“Secontaurus,” saith his opponent, “*was a very small and contemptible village that Ischyrras was made Bishop of, containing so few inhabitants that there was never Church there before.*” To this Dr. Maurice replies, “Is this then to be a model of primitive Episcopacy? But this place deserves a more particular consideration. This Bishop, who pretended to be a Presbyter of Meletius or Colluthus his ordination; accused Athanasius of forcing his Church; overthrowing his Communion table, and breaking the chalice: although it was proved that he never was a Presbyter, nor had any Church; for there never had been any in his village. For a reward of calumny this hamlet was erected into a Bishop’s seat by Constantius, in opposition to the Catholic faith, to the rules of the Church, and to ancient tradition and usage of that country. Athanasius is very particular in his description of this place, which was made the scene of his accusation; and tells us that Mareotis, the region in which this village was, had always belonged to the Bishop of Alexandria as part of his diocese; that there never had been a Bishop, nor so much as a Chorepiscopus before Ischyrras; but the villages were distributed to Presbyters, some having ten, some more of them to make up the parish. In this region there were fourteen parish Pres-

byters, and thirteen Deacons, as appears by their subscription to the letter sent to the Synod of Tyre on behalf of their Bishop. This was the state of that place, and since our author was not ashamed of urging this instance to countenance his notion, I am content the whole cause should be tried upon this issue, and that it may be judged by this instance, which Episcopacy was the primitive, diocesan or congregational. Here was a large region that had many Churches and many more villages so near Alexandria, that they could not want Christians in the earliest times; yet we are assured by a competent judge, (Athanasius) that this region never had a Bishop of its own, but was always under the Bishop of Alexandria, who at certain times visited it in person. But about three hundred years after St. Mark had planted the church of Alexandria, Constantius upon the instigation of the Arians, made one of the least of these villages a bishop's seat, against all rule and prescription, as Athanasius contends. Judge then which is the most ancient or most primitive in this place, the Diocesan or the Parish Bishops. And since the Council of Sardica is obliquely taxed by Mr. Clarkson, as guilty of innovation upon the account of forbidding Bishops to be made in villages, excepting such where Bishops had been formerly made, this passage is sufficient to clear and justify that Canon against frivolous reflections, since it appears from hence that there was too much reason to put a check to the innovations of the Arians, who, for the encouragement and strengthening of their party, took upon them to multiply Bishoprics, contrary to the ancient tradition and practice of the Church*."

The same author begins a set of testimonies as complete as can well be imagined, with this remark: "What country or territory the ancient Bishops had, besides the city where they lived, comes now under examination, and if it

* Maurice Defence, &c. p. 65.

shall appear, by testimonies unexceptionable, that the ancient cities had large territories, and that these territories were under the Bishop of the city, and that the people there were too numerous and too far distant to be able to come to the Bishop's Church, then I hope we shall be no more troubled with this new way of measuring ancient Bishoprics by the compass of the city walls *."

NOTE II.

"Altar, in the primitive sense, signified not only the Communion Table, but the whole place where the chair of the Bishop and the seats of the Presbyters were placed, and in this sense there was but one altar in one Diocese, as there is now but one Consistory. This is explained by passages out of Ignatius Cyprian, and archbishop Usher: and to be within the altar which is Ignatius's phrase, is no other than to be in communion with the Bishop and his Clergy; and the one altar is no more than one communion, which may be held in different places and at several tables †."

* Maurice Defence, chap. vi. p. 367:

† Ibid. p. 37.

THE END.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY R. GILBERT,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

5
S. H. 1828.

"THE DANGER OF MINISTERIAL DELINQUENCY."

A

10

SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

PARISH CHURCH OF OUNDLE,

MAY XII, MDCCCXXVIII,

AT

THE VISITATION

OF THE

VENERABLE WILLIAM STRONG, D.D.

ARCHDEACON OF NORTHAMPTON.



BY THE

REV. HENRY ROLLS, M.A.,

OF BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD,

RECTOR OF ALDWINCLE ALL SAINTS.

*PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE ARCHDEACON AND
CLERGY.*

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. & J. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,

AND WATERLOO-PLACE, FALL-MALL.

1828.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY R. GILBERT,
ST. JOHN'S-SQUARE.

TO THE
VENERABLE ARCHDEACON STRONG,
AND THE
CLERGY OF THE DEANERIES OF OUNDLE AND WELDON,
ASSEMBLED AT HIS VISITATION,

This Sermon,

PREACHED BEFORE THEM, AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,
IS DEDICATED,

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF RESPECT AND REGARD,

BY THEIR OBEDIENT FRIEND AND SERVANT,

HENRY ROLLS.

ALDWINCLE RECTORY,
May 13, 1828.

A
SERMON,

8c.

LUKE IX. 62.

No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

AFTER our Lord had chosen his twelve Apostles to be the constant attendants on his ministry, the evidences of his works of wonder and beneficence, the witnesses of his spontaneous sacrifice of himself, and the future propagators of the Gospel of reconciliation, it is recorded by the Evangelist, that " he appointed other seventy also, and sent them into every city and place, whither he would come," that they might prepare the minds of the people for the reception of his doctrines. It would seem that several of his followers came forward with alacrity, and proffered their services in the ministry, as men zealously and sincerely devoted to the righteous cause he had in hand, and we may reasonably sup-

pose from their doing this simultaneously, that he had just before intimated to them his design of sending more labourers into the vineyard. One of his attendants exclaimed, with all the fervour of truth and devotion, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." The secret impulse of this man's heart was doubtless known to Christ, but without appearing to distrust his integrity, and without imputing to him blame for the unmeasured zeal which he had thus displayed, Jesus kindly and candidly forewarned him of the difficulties, dangers, and trials that the servants of such a Master must necessarily have to encounter. In language of unparalleled simplicity and pathos he replied, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Another of his hearers, who had probably given some evidences of attachment to his person, our Lord graciously invited to follow him, but this man could not persuade himself, at the instant, to relinquish the world with its powerful attractions, and nothing doubting that his plea was such as would be admitted, he said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." The answer which he received is remarkable, shewing that even the most pressing calls of humanity may not interfere with the positive duties of those who mean to consecrate themselves to the ministry of Christ. "Let the dead bury their dead." Let those engaged in secular

affairs attend to their own proper business,—they have their duties to perform, you have yours, “Go thou and preach the kingdom of God.” And another also said, “Lord I will follow thee, but let me first go and bid them farewell that are at home at my house.” Here again the reply of our Lord affords every minister of the Gospel a lesson as plain as it is instructive, and not less valuable in its results, than simple in its dictates. The calls of religion are imperative, the duties of the ministry are so pressing as to admit of no delay, no excuse whatever. That concern for temporal affairs, which, even as respects the Christian pastor, is not always to be blamed, which in many instances may not be dispensed with, regard also and solicitude for the welfare of friends, whom we justly esteem and love, nay even a fond and due affection for those united to us by the most powerful of earthly ties, must all give way to the far more important duties incumbent on such as have dedicated themselves to the service of Christ in his heavenly vineyard. There must be no hesitation, no delay, no irresolution, no “looking back;” for to apply the maxim of our blessed Lord, so forcibly urged, and so pointedly expressed, “No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

We have here before us a portion of Scripture which most deeply concerns every individual who

believes himself to have been duly called to the ministry,—which peculiarly addresses itself to all that are “separated unto the Gospel of God, concerning his Son Jesus Christ.” By a reference to these interesting proceedings of our Lord and Master, in selecting and appointing a regularly commissioned ministry, we are carried back to the first principles of our duty in that character in which, according to annual custom, we are now assembled together. To deduce from these principles such consequences as may place before us the duties of the pastoral office in the most commanding attitude, is the object of my present discourse.

In the case of the first of these candidates, we cannot but see how tenderly our Lord points out the necessity of caution and deliberation on entering upon an office of so much difficulty and responsibility as that of a minister of the Gospel.

In the case of the second, we are reminded of the indispensable obligations we are under, as ministers of Christ, of withdrawing our heart and affections from the secular affairs of life, and of yielding ourselves, not in part only, but wholly and unreservedly, to the special duties of our calling.

And the remarkable answer given by our Lord to the proposal of the third candidate, in the words of my text, is eminently calculated to impress upon our minds the guilt and danger of “looking back,”

or in any degree departing from the full measure of duty incumbent on the Christian minister.

Let us now endeavour to derive some lessons of practical utility from a closer consideration of these three cases, as they appear to bear upon the responsibility and obligations of our sacred office. With this view I proceed to treat of them in order.

I. Every reflecting mind must perceive and acknowledge the indispensable necessity of mature deliberation, assisted by all the support which fervent prayer and mental devotion can supply, ere he venture to take upon him so weighty a responsibility as that of a minister of Christ, and in seeking that holy office, he can have but one legitimate object, namely, a zeal for the glory of God, accompanied by an ardent desire for the everlasting welfare of man ;—whether this was the predominant impulse by which we individually were actuated at that awful crisis when we assumed the sacred ephod, and first became the teachers and guides of others, it is now too late to enquire ; nor is it necessary for our present purpose to enter upon those subtle and abstruse points, involved in the important question, whether our call to the office was like that of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, positive, imperative, and irresistible ; or whether we were more remotely influenced by the divine suggestions of the Holy Spirit. No wise man, assuredly no man skilled in worldly wisdom, would undertake

“to build a tower, without first sitting down to count the cost ;”—but however our minds may have been influenced in the first step of our ministerial career, it is certain that we are irrevocably pledged to a faithful discharge of most important duties ;—we have spontaneously and most solemnly dedicated ourselves to the service of the altar ; we have put our hand to the plough ; we have, in an extended sense of the metaphor, taken up the cross ;—and although forcibly yet tenderly forewarned by our blessed Lord of the almost overwhelming difficulties and responsibility of the undertaking in those words so feelingly addressed to his earliest recorded candidate, yet with this everlasting beacon before us have we enlisted ourselves under the sacred banners of the cross, as “ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.” We have solemnly and deliberately engaged in an irreversible compact, and whether by fervent prayer for the assistance of God’s Holy Spirit to direct our hearts and minds in the important decision, we strove in the first instance with zeal and devotion properly to fit ourselves for the duties of so heavenly a calling, or whether we failed in this grand requisite for a due assumption of the holy office, certain it is, that we have now but one course to pursue ; we may amend the past, through a thankful acceptance of God’s grace to help us, but we may not, we *must not* look back.

II. The next important point for our consideration presents itself in the case of the disciple, who expressed his readiness to accept the gracious offer of becoming a commissioned teacher of the Gospel of Christ, but who, at the same time said, "Lord suffer me first to go and bury my father." Doubtless this man conceived that he had a fair and admissible plea for procrastinating, but our Saviour penetrated the inmost recesses of his heart, knew what he perceived not himself, saw through the flimsiness of the pretext, and for the benefit of all future aspirants to the holy office of a Christian teacher, rebuked him with apparent harshness, "Let the dead bury their dead; go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Thus are we taught with authoritative emphasis, that he who has once decided on the important work of the ministry, must on no occasion suffer the affairs of the world to interfere with his spiritual duties. Not that we are so set apart from the rest of mankind as to countenance the endless absurdities of an ascetic life, but from the moment that we engage in the service of Christ, we are bound to wield the sword of the Spirit, to the furtherance of his kingdom, and "forgetting those things which are behind, to press forward." All secular affairs must be left to the conduct and management of those to whom such matters belong. When any of the duties of our sacred office demand our attention, however

comparatively unimportant, we cannot innocently defer or postpone the performance of them to the claims of social life. "No man that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." Even the obligations of friendship, the tender ties of kindred, the bonds of parental and filial affection must succumb to the paramount duties of our calling, if it should so happen that they are brought into competition or rivalry with each other. Happily for us, however, we live in times when no such sacrifices are required of us; our duties and our happiness go hand in hand together, but we know not to what painful trials we may yet be reserved; we know not to what test our ministerial integrity may hereafter be subjected. Remembering therefore, that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world," it becomes us to "stand firm, having our loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness." If perverse inclination, if mistaken notions of expediency, if the tyranny of fashion, misguided enthusiasm, or the maxims of worldly policy attempt to exercise domination over our too readily prostrated spirits, we must refer to first principles, we must have recourse to that infallible guide, who addressed the wavering disciple in those memorable words, "Let the dead bury their dead."

If we sink under such temptations, if we submit to the ascendancy of such undue control, it will not be for want of instruction, or caution, or the gracious means of divine support. If any earthly consideration could excuse a breach of the rule before us, surely it would have been such as that which we here find proposed to the Lord of the Vineyard himself, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." Whether we regard this conditional assent as referring to the attentions due to an aged and declining parent, or to the last earthly claims of filial love, nothing, abstractedly considered, could be more reasonable than such a proposal, but it is obvious that this extreme case was adduced, in order the more pointedly to enforce the position, that no earthly consideration whatever can justify our neglect of the positive and ascertained duties of our holy calling. Christ will not share a divided empire, if we will be his accepted and approved disciples, we must propose to ourselves no reservations, we must make no stipulations, we must ask no conditions;—"Go thou and preach the kingdom of God."

III. Let us now proceed to a consideration of the guilt and danger of "looking back," or in any degree departing from the full measure of duty incumbent on the Christian Minister. We have the positive authority of the Son of God himself for saying, that "no man having put his hand to the

plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God ;” and the circumstances connected with our Lord’s utterance of these words, remove all doubt, if doubt there could be, of their proper application. It is a strong expression,—it is a denunciation, in fact, not less awful in its import, than it is incapable of being misconstrued. It is hardly possible to imagine that any one can be insensible to the guilt and danger of ministerial delinquency, but considering the frailty of our nature, and remembering that we are subject to like passions with other men, it need not excite surprise (however we may lament the fact) that we should, not unfrequently, deceive ourselves as to the extent and measure of our pastoral duties. We are not left without a sure guide, however, in a matter of such vital importance ;—we are not left to the vague suggestions of our own fallible judgment, we have ever before our eyes those exalted patterns of faith and obedience, so fully portrayed in Holy Writ, for our instruction, encouragement, and comfort in the duties of our sacred calling ; and what is more, we have special promises also, of divine assistance, if we seek it with diligence and devotion. “ He that doeth the will of God, shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God,” and we may be assured, that they who are set over the people to watch for their souls as they that must give account, can never be left in ignorance of their duty so long as they humbly strive

by prayer and watchfulness to prove themselves faithful servants of their divine Master.

But what is it to “put our hand to the plough?” and what is intended by the expression of “looking back?” To put our hand to the plough, in the phraseology of Scripture, is to hire ourselves out as labourers in the heavenly vineyard of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. To serve under Him, and with Him, in striving by all means to further the gracious objects of his divine will, in bringing sinners to salvation. In this blessed work, we, Reverend Brethren, have seriously and deliberately embarked, to this object we are formally and positively pledged, and if at that awful hour when we shall be called upon to give an account of our Stewardship, we should be found wanting, if we should then be numbered amongst those who have “looked back,” our doom is already fixed, our judgment is already pronounced;—we are not “fit for the kingdom of God,”—not fit either for the promoting of his kingdom of grace here, or the enjoyment of his kingdom of glory hereafter.

How important is it then that we should always have deeply impressed on our minds the tremendous responsibility of our holy office, and the fearful danger to which the apostate, the wavering, the too confident, and the supine Minister of Christ are exposed! There are various ways in which the spiritual husbandman may be said to “look back”

from the work which he has solemnly engaged to perform, and by which he is rendered obnoxious to the charge, and the punishment also, of an unfaithful servant.

(1.) He who "looketh back," in the primary sense of the expression, is the apostate minister, or he who entirely throws aside the externals, together with the positive duties of his office; who would, if it were possible, revoke the vows he had solemnly plighted at the altar of his God, and who in his heart has virtually renounced his holy calling. Let us hope there are few "lookers back" of this description, who have taken their hands altogether from the plough; yet, whatever weight of guilt they may bring upon themselves, these are not, after all, so dangerous to the welfare of Christ's flock at large, as those unfaithful servants of his, who still retain the profession, while they neglect the duties, of their calling.

(2.) Let us now look at the wavering and unsteady Minister of the Gospel, for he also is a "looker back." Neither his hand nor his eye, neither his understanding nor his heart, are engaged in the work he is about; he has no settled principles of action; he is "tossed about by every wind of doctrine;" he looks not, like a skilful ploughman, in a straight forward line on the furrow which he has begun, but allows any object that presents itself to divert his attention from his proper work.

To change the metaphor, his flock are left "as sheep without a shepherd," to the mercy of the prowling wolf, that "great enemy of mankind, who goes about seeking whom he may devour."

(3.) Nor is the conduct of the too confident or self-sufficient Minister of Christ much less to be deprecated. Into whatever good actions the ardour of his zeal may carry him, the advantage is more than counterbalanced by the confusion and disorder which his eccentricities and extravagancies occasion. Let it be remembered, that he is not the best workman who passes over the greatest surface, nor he who looketh on the work of others to the neglect of his own. Every man, and especially every Minister of the Gospel, has his proper sphere of action, nor can his services, however zealously exercised, be so beneficial to Christ's flock, when spread over a too widely extended field, as when chiefly confined within his own allotted sphere of operation. "Let all things be done decently and in order." Let no man put his sickle into his neighbour's corn, nor cross into the furrows of his fellow-labourers in the vineyard; this is not to look forward, but to look back, to distract and tear asunder the members of Christ's Church, and to become unfit for preaching the kingdom of God.

(4.) Lastly, the irresolute and supine Minister, who is indifferent to the duties of his calling, may

be regarded as “ a looker back ;” and if we are to measure his guilt by the injury which his flock must necessarily sustain, he is not less liable to the awful denunciations in the text, than he who altogether renounces his Ordination Vows. The undisguised apostate withdraws all pretensions to the character of a Christian Teacher, and so becomes rather the enemy of himself than of others, whilst the careless and inefficient Pastor professes but to deceive, and so involves in perplexity and darkness the souls of those whom he has been appointed to succour, help, and comfort.

There are various cogent reasons, my Reverend Brethren, why we should at this crisis be peculiarly circumspect; the eyes of the people never were more pointedly fixed upon their spiritual watchmen than at the present moment, never perhaps was there evinced throughout this Christian land, a greater thirst for religious knowledge, or a more abundant display of outward piety. This exuberance of zeal, however, is not unaccompanied by strong symptoms of increasing infidelity throughout all ranks of society. The Church has to contend, at once, with the malignant attacks of its insidious foes, and the enthusiastic vagaries of its injudicious friends. The guardians of the Church, therefore, must be careful, on the one hand to watch the machinations of the wily infidel, and on the other, they must endeavour, not so much to damp the

ardour of religious zeal, though it be misguided, as to direct its influence aright.

To us, more particularly, is this important trust committed, and we must strive, through divine grace, not less by our example than by precept, to shew ourselves “ approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” By a careless demeanour, or open disregard of the positive duties of our holy profession, we shall “ give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme,” for as human nature is constituted, there will always be found men who would rather discover in the misconduct of their professed guides, an excuse for their favourite vices, than relinquish those vices to tread in the footsteps of Religion and virtue. Thus an awful responsibility hangeth over our heads, and woe be unto us, if we should be found, at the great day of account, to have lightly regarded those important interests committed to our charge. Still, we may plough with persevering industry, and scatter the good seed, provided for us, with unsparing profusion; yet unless it please the Lord of the Harvest to let fall the dew of Heaven on the labour of our hands, in vain shall we look for the desired increase. Let us then with heart and soul humbly implore the divine assistance of God’s Holy Spirit in our behalf, without which our best endeavours must inevitably fail; and let us cordially unite with each other in all the

amiable offices of Christian benevolence and brotherly love, that those whom we are appointed to teach may learn from our good example to confide in the doctrines, and take comfort in the promises, which we are authorized to set before them. If our pastoral duties are exercised with fidelity and care, doubtless a severe sentence awaits those who take no heed to profit by our spiritual exertions, but if we ourselves should fail, we have to answer, not only for our own souls, but the souls of those committed to our charge.

May God, therefore, in his infinite mercy, grant to all his people "increase of grace to hear meekly his word, and to receive it with pure affection," and to this end, so devoutly to be wished, may He graciously vouchsafe to pour upon the hearts of his "chosen Ministers the continued dew of his blessing," that so, when time shall be no more, we and our respective flocks, with all His Saints departed this life, may meet together in everlasting bliss, as "one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

THE END.

J.H. 1828.

THE AGENCY OF HUMAN MEANS IN THE
PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL :

A
SERMON,
PREACHED IN
St John's Episcopal Chapel.
EDINBURGH,

ON THURSDAY, MARCH 13. 1828;
IN PRESENCE OF THE
DISTRICT COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETY
FOR
PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

BY THE REVEREND
MICHAEL RUSSELL, L. L. D.
EPISCOPAL MINISTER, LEITH.



TO WHICH ARE ANNEXED, A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE SOCIETY, AND
A LIST OF SOME OF ITS BOOKS AND TRACTS.

EDINBURGH :
Printed by John Moir, West Register Street,
FOR BELL AND BRADFUTE, BANK STREET ;
AND C. & J. RIVINGTON, LONDON.

1828.

TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND

DANIEL SANDFORD, D. D.

BISHOP OF THE UNITED DIOCESE OF EDINBURGH,
FIFE, AND GLASGOW,

THIS DISCOURSE

IS INSCRIBED,

WITH FEELINGS OF THE SINCEREST RESPECT

AND ESTEEM,

BY HIS DUTIFUL AND FAITHFUL

SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

SERMON.

ST JOHN, Chap. xvi. v. 5, 6, 7.

“ But now I go my way to Him that sent me, and none of you asketh me
“ whither goest thou ? But because I have said these things unto you,
“ sorrow hath filled your heart, Nevertheless, I tell you the truth,
“ It is ~~EXPEDIENT~~ ~~FOR YOU THAT~~ I GO AWAY ; for if I go not away,
“ the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send
“ him unto you.”

IN his last address to his disciples, of which the words now read are a part, our blessed Lord informed them that, after he should have laid the foundations of his Church on the great events which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem, his personal presence would be no longer necessary either for their direction or support ; but that, on the contrary, it would be found expedient for them that he should go away, and leave the great building of God to be perfected by their hands.

The reason assigned for this expediency respected, no doubt, the peculiar circumstances in which the Apostles were about to be placed as

the first ministers of the Gospel, and destined as such to receive, at no distant period, those wonderful gifts of knowledge and power, which conveyed strength to the weak and wisdom to the foolish. As far as they were exclusively concerned, the assurance given by their Divine Master appears to have been intended to impress upon their minds, that, as long as he should remain amongst them as their visible head, the purposes for which he had called them into his service could not be fully realized; that, until he ascended into heaven, their proper duties could not begin upon earth; nor could they be raised, as instruments of the Divine benevolence, to that high station which he had shadowed forth to them, under the figure of the twelve thrones and of dominion over the tribes of Israel.

“It is expedient for you that I go away;” as long as I am in the world, you are nothing; but no sooner shall I have departed from it, than your authority and commission will appear in their true light. You will then perceive clearly the important object for which you were chosen from among your countrymen; and you shall be invested, at the same time, with all the qualifications necessary to fit you for bringing that object to a successful issue.

“ If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” In extending the belief of the Gospel throughout the surrounding nations, the work will be more suitably performed by your ministry than by the longer continuance of mine ; for, in your case, the efficacy will manifestly appear to belong, not to the agents which are employed, but to the cause in which your exertions are to be made, and to the divine warrant on which you are to proceed. If I go not away, the authority and power with which I am clothed as the Mediator of the New Covenant must still remain with me ; but when I shall have returned to those celestial regions whence I came, there will descend upon you a supernatural illumination and energy, which will lead you to a full knowledge of all the truth, which, at sundry times, I have revealed in your hearing ; guide you to the best means for accomplishing the gracious designs upon which you are to be sent forth ; animate you in all your labours, support you in all your sufferings, and carry you through the revilings and contradiction of the unbelieving world, conquering and to conquer.

By pursuing our enquiry into the reasons now suggested, we might, perhaps, discover, still

more clearly, the grounds on which our Lord rested the expediency of leaving to his chosen servants the arduous task of evangelizing the nations. But it is not my intention to follow out, at any greater length, the import of the text as it respected those to whom it was first addressed; thinking that it might accord better with the object of our present meeting, were I to extend the application of the Redeemer's words, and to shew that the expediency of which he spoke did not cease with the nomination of the Apostles to their high office, nor even with the labours of those inspired messengers in propagating the faith and the hopes of his Gospel. Believing that the wise arrangement of our blessed Saviour, now under our consideration, had also a reference to those more general principles which regulate the operations of human thought in every condition of society, as well as to those other laws upon which the moral government of God is founded in all ages, I shall proceed, with a due reliance upon the Heavenly grace, to illustrate the following proposition, namely, that, *after the great work of redemption was completed by the death and resurrection of our blessed Lord, the extension of Christian knowledge was most suitably and effectually promoted by the instrumentality of human means* ;

that is, in other words, *by an ordinary rather than by an extraordinary providence.*

To assist your comprehension of the argument upon which I am about to enter, I shall divide it into three heads, and endeavour to shew, in the

First place, That the method actually adopted by Divine Wisdom was more expedient than any other, because, being strictly analogous to the general procedure of Providence towards mankind, it did not derange those principles on which society is founded, and from whence spring at once the improvement and the responsibility of the human being.

In the second place, I shall attempt to illustrate the statement, that a continuance of the personal presence and supernatural administration of the Redeemer, until his Gospel should have been firmly established in Judea, would not have produced upon the belief of mankind, in subsequent ages, the effects which a hasty reasoner might be inclined to expect from so striking an event ; and,

Thirdly, That the propagation of Christianity by the ministry of the Apostles, their original character and circumstances being duly considered, is, at this distant day, a more convincing proof of the divine origin of our holy reli-

gion than any other that could have been supplied ; because the fact and the evidence still remain completely entire, are level to the comprehension of every mature understanding, and can, consequently, be examined according to those ordinary rules by which the value of all human testimony must be finally determined.

1st, In this preliminary state of existence, where man is doomed, even in regard to the things of this world, to walk by faith more frequently than by sight, the motives presented to him, for the direction of his general conduct, are such as must operate upon the will through the medium of reason, experience, and reflection. In the common affairs of life, he is supplied by Providence with such a degree of probability only as renders all his actions the result of a certain species of calculation ; and which, while it calls into exercise a firm trust in the goodness and wisdom of God, gives employment to all those powers of mind by which the race of Adam is distinguished from the lower creation. By the very prerogative of his nature, which has given to him, in the scale of being, a place little lower than that of the angels, man is continually impelled, as well in respect to the interests of earth as of heaven, to look not only at the things which are seen, but at the things

which are not seen ; to connect, in all circumstances, his conduct with his hopes, his exertions with his enjoyments, and the present with the future.

I need not remark that this condition of our nature, these laws of the ordinary providence under which we are placed upon earth, could not be long suspended, without materially weakening the foundations of that harmonious and beautiful system of cause and effect, by which faith, obedience, industry, and watchfulness are produced and matured in the soul of man ; and whence, as it were, by the secret teaching of God, and by the guidance of an invisible hand, the docile and submissive among human beings are so led through things temporal that they finally lose not the things eternal. While our Saviour was on earth, he fed the hungry, he healed the sick, and he instructed the ignorant, in a miraculous manner ; but we can perceive, on more than one occasion, that he was desirous to obviate the effects of such an interference with the established rules of the Divine government. When, for example, on a memorable occurrence, he communicated to the famished multitude, who had followed him to the borders of the desert, a supply of food sufficient to sustain their bodies until they could reach an inha-

bited land, he sent them away from his presence, to resume the duties of life, and to replace themselves under the influence of their ordinary habits and motives. It was, indeed, expedient that he who came in the name of God, and was clothed with the attributes of the Eternal, should thus prove his divine commission—that the blind should receive their sight, that the deaf should be made to hear, that the lame should be enabled to walk, and even that the dead should be raised to life, at his omnipotent word—but it was no less expedient that, as soon as he had fulfilled the work which his Father had given him to do, and which the arm of flesh could not achieve, he should permit the train of events to return to its wonted course, and leave to the agency of man all that human means could possibly accomplish.

It were not good for the son of Adam, as he is now constituted, that he should long eat bread without the sweat of his brow, or cease to rely upon the former and the latter rain which refresh the earth when it is weary, and to confide in the blessing of Him who hath made summer and winter, and who hath reserved unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest. Nor were it good for man, in his present state, that he could become learned without application; or wise in the

things of nature, without reflection and protracted research ; because, from these exertions arise not only the greatest improvement, but also the greatest happiness of which he is susceptible in this lower world. “ The intellectual worth and “ dignity of man,” says a modern writer, “ are “ measured, not by the truth that he possesses, “ or fancies that he possesses, but by the sincere “ and honest pains which he takes to discover “ truth. This it is which invigorates his mind, “ and by exercising the mental springs, preserves “ them in full activity. Possession makes us “ indifferent, indolent, and proud. If the Deity “ held in his right hand all truth, and in his left “ the ever-active impulse only, the fond desire “ and longing after truth, even coupled with the “ condition of being liable to constant error, and “ should offer me the choice, I should humbly “ turn towards the left hand, and say, FATHER, “ GIVE ME THIS : pure truth is fit for thee alone ; “ the search of it better becomes me, in the pre- “ sent contracted range of my means and my “ faculties.”*

The very same principle applies to our faith and hopes ; to the mental exercises with which they are connected, and to the spiritual improve-

* TREVIRANUS, *Biologie*, b. 1.

ment in which, through the grace of God, they are usually found to terminate. The numerous inquiries to which religion invites us; the weighing of evidence, and the balancing of probabilities; the earnest desire to learn, and the fear of falling into error; our natural confidence in reason checked by the authority of revelation; our research into the actions and motives of men, as mixed with the counsels of heaven in the first propagation of the Gospel,—these supply a species of training and discipline to the Christian mind, which could not have existed in the absence of those difficulties which must ever attach to the contemplation of divine things, as long as they shall be seen but as through a glass darkly. Were this fight of faith, this conflict of the spirit, to be superseded by the indubitable annunciations of an extraordinary providence; were the personal presence of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth to afford such overwhelming evidence and such distinct views, in regard to the unseen world, as would enable man to know even as also he is known; were the heavens to be opened, and the angels of God seen descending to confirm the belief, or to enlighten the mind of the doubter,—it is manifest that the use of religion, as the means of enforcing our obedience, and of bending our wills to the authority of the Di-

vine Lawgiver, would instantly cease. There would no longer be any room for that sincere and patient inquiry, for that simple and humble frame of mind which is compared to the docility of a little child ; and which is justly regarded as at once the best preparation and the richest recompense that adorns the path of the Christian, in the search of evangelical truth. In a word, the continuance of that supernatural economy which our Lord directed whilst among men, would not have been expedient, viewed in reference to the character and condition of the human being. And I shall now proceed to shew, in the

Second place, That such a dispensation as must have attended the personal ministry of Jesus Christ, after he rose from the dead, would not have produced upon the faith of mankind, in subsequent ages, the effects which, at first view, we might be inclined to expect from it.

We are extremely apt to fall into error on this important subject, and to imagine that the continuance of our Saviour's personal ministry upon earth would necessarily have led to results, in favour of his religion, which could not be produced by the labours of the most enlightened and zealous of his disciples. In our solitary musings, we are sometimes disposed to think,

that had our Lord, after his resurrection, presented himself to Pontius Pilate, who condemned him to be crucified, and before the council of the chief priests and elders, who had thirsted for his blood ; shewing to them, as he did to St Thomas, his hands and his feet pierced with the nails, and his side wounded with the spear, it would have been impossible for them any longer to doubt his divine authority, or, at least, to call in question the fact of his having risen from the dead. Had he, after displaying these infallible signs of supernatural power, summoned the leading men of Jerusalem, both Jews and Gentiles, to the hill of Calvary, where he had recently given up the ghost ; and, after recapitulating to them all that he had done and taught as the ambassador of Almighty God, and as the Messiah promised to the fathers of the Hebrew nation, renewed his solemn assurance that, as he had died to save the human race from the penalty of their transgressions, so he would, in due time, ascend into heaven, whence, at the end of the world, he would come again to judge all the tribes and kindreds of the earth.

Such evidence, we allow ourselves to imagine, it would have been impossible either to gainsay or to resist. If the same adversaries who had seen him extended on the cross, and laid in the

sepulchre, had seen him again in life, and had, once more, heard him unfolding his sublime views of immortality, and his doctrine of future reward and punishment, it is next to impossible, we are willing to conclude, but that all the inhabitants of the holy city, the Roman governor with his numerous attendants, and even Herod with his men of war, must have yielded an implicit belief to the Gospel, and ranked themselves among the first and most determined adherents of the Redeemer. And, instead of going away, had he remained on earth to enforce his doctrines, and to secure for his wise and beneficent institutions a firm establishment among all ranks of men ; had he enlightened the Jews in regard to the real nature and objects of their ancient religion, and pointed out more clearly, to the Greek and the Roman, the Great Being whom they still blindly worshipped ; removing, at the same time, all grounds of error, and precluding all sources of mistake, in relation to his own precepts and ordinances ; giving to the whole Christian community the same creed, the same worship, the same hope, and the same mind, as well in duty as in faith : had he done these things, would he not, we are tempted to ask, have conferred a greater benefaction upon the children of men than could possibly be ac-

complished by the ministry of twelve illiterate fishermen ?

These views present themselves to the hasty reader of the inspired narrative, as coinciding best with the ignorance and narrow conceptions of the human understanding. That they are wrong we can have no doubt, upon the simple assurance of our blessed Lord, that Divine Wisdom had ordered it otherwise : “ I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away.” But we are not compelled to rest this conclusion on the basis of mere authority ; for, even with the faint light which is supplied to us by reason, we can discover the grounds of the expediency referred to by our Lord ; we can see that, after the atonement for sin was made by his death upon the cross, the propagation of the Gospel was more suitably affected by human means than by an extraordinary providence, manifested in a series of supernatural phenomena.

A miracle, be it remembered, is fitted to satisfy only the age or the individuals who witness it ; for, in the very next generation, it becomes a matter of mere human testimony, and must be received or rejected on the ordinary grounds which support all historical belief. For example, had our Lord, after his resurrection, appeared to the people of Jerusalem,

and satisfied them that he was indeed the very person who had lately fallen a victim to the disappointment of the Jews and the jealousy of the Romans, he would, no doubt, have thereby made a deep impression upon their minds, and opened up a wide entrance for the reception of his religion in that particular spot. But it is manifest that the children of the first believers, even after the lapse of a very short period, would not have found themselves in possession of the same advantages; and hence, before they could follow the faith of their fathers, they must have consented to repose their confidence upon the soundness of the testimony, by means of which the miraculous incidents had been conveyed to their ears.

In process of time, moreover, doubts would have begun to arise, and chiefly with regard to the identity of the Redeemer's person; for if, when he presented himself to his own disciples, in whose society he had spent more than two years, some of them, when they saw him, were slow to admit that he was the very Jesus of Nazareth into whose service they had entered—to whose discourses they had so often listened, and to whose wonderful works they had so frequently borne witness,—may we not presume that similar misgivings would have been

extensively propagated among a large multitude, and, consequently, that the personal appeal, on the part of our Lord, which is so much desiderated by hasty reasoners, would have soon ceased to produce any effect upon the belief of the world.* Even the men who saw him would, in a little time, have allowed themselves to question the accuracy of their own perceptions; and, as ages rolled on, difficulties of this kind would have continually augmented, and the force of the original impression would have been gradually weakened. It was, therefore, expedient that our Lord should go away, and commit the propagation of religious faith and knowledge to those ordinary means which are supplied by human zeal, courage, and fidelity.

Besides, whatever might have been the im-

* “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him, *but some doubted.*”—Matth. xxviii. 16, 17.

“And as he thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me have.”—Luke, xxix. 36, 37, 38, 39.

pression created in the first warm moments of conviction, the evidence for Christianity would always have been encumbered with this objection in regard to the Jews ; namely, that they expected a Messias, and were, therefore, the more ready to be deceived by the pretensions of any one, whose actions bore the slightest resemblance to the prophetical character which was shadowed forth in their ancient writings. The unanimous reception of our Saviour by that people would constantly have been attended by the suspicion which I have just mentioned. He came unto his own, it would have been said, and his own received him : There was no examination of his claims, no scrutiny into his views, no measuring of his power : they first allowed themselves to be deceived, and now they endeavour to involve us in the contempt which attaches to their credulity, and in the guilt which belongs to the propagation of an imposture.

For these reasons, and for others which are concealed in the depths of Divine Wisdom, our blessed Saviour thought it not expedient to establish his church in the world, by carrying captive the senses of the generation among whom he dwelt in the flesh. He preferred, for that great purpose, the ministry of his Apostles ; which, as I have undertaken to illustrate in the

Third place, will not fail to appear, when their original character and circumstances are duly considered, a more convincing proof of the heavenly origin of our religion than any other that could have been produced.

The moral phenomenon, then, which we are now to contemplate, as an irresistible argument for the truth of Christianity, is the propagation of the Gospel by the agency of a few illiterate men : a fact which affords at once a support to our faith as followers of the Redeemer, and an incitement to our zeal as members of the Society which you here represent. The miracle which our Lord employed to gain the world to his religion, was that by which the weak understanding was enabled to overcome the strong, the ignorant to confound the wise, and those who had no knowledge to convince the disputer and to strengthen the believer. It consisted in converting the most civilized, the most learned, the most powerful nations on the face of the earth, to a faith completely opposed to that in which they had been educated, by the ministry of twelve individuals, who were equally unacquainted with letters and with mankind ; and who themselves, when they were first called to discharge that important duty, thought of nothing so little as of preaching a new re-

ligion to the subtle Greek and the haughty Roman.

But, viewed as an argument for the divine origin of our holy faith, and as the means of extending its farther reception among unbelievers, it is of the utmost consequence to remark, that the moral wonder performed by our Lord, in the persons of his Apostles, was of such a nature, that we are not less qualified to form a judgment in respect to it, at the present day, than if we had witnessed its immediate effects at Jerusalem, Ephesus, or Corinth. We know the force of prejudice and superstition, and how unequal the attack is which is made upon these high places of human error, by the unassisted arms of truth and reason, and, more particularly, when such arms are wielded by men who have nothing to recommend them but their zeal and honesty. We know how slow the progress of reform is, whenever it directs itself against the habits and indulgences of a proud, a wealthy, and a luxurious people; and how reluctantly they yield to vulgar remonstrance and low-bred importunity, the customs which have grown up with their nation, and distinguished the most brilliant period of their history. In a word, we know, in some degree, the amount of the obstacles which must have opposed themselves to the

success of twelve, rude, unlearned, men, in their attempt to abolish the national worship of any old country ; and to substitute in its place a set of opinions, moral precepts, and ritual observances, altogether different from those to which the people had been accustomed. What undertaking was more unlikely to prosper, in the hands of such men as the Apostles originally were, than to bring to a close the splendid ceremonies of the temple of Jerusalem, and to throw down the thousand altars which burned with incense and the fat of rams in the imperial city of Rome? Such an object, to be effected by such instruments, implied one of the greatest improbabilities that could possibly be imagined : and I need not add, that the success which every where crowned their labours, has been justly held as a strong and very intelligible proof, that the cause which they advocated enjoyed the countenance of heaven.

Are we not, then, entitled to conclude, that the event now mentioned, inasmuch as it was brought to pass by the operation of such secondary causes as coincide in some degree with our own experience, and fall under the cognizance of reason, has become a much stronger foundation for belief than could have been supplied by a more striking deviation from the ordinary

course of providence? Every reflecting man will be ready to decide in the affirmative, not only because the fact still remains accompanied with its original evidence—the conversion of a large portion of the civilized world to the faith of the gospel—which may be examined again and again, until its true character shall be completely ascertained ; but chiefly because, as we are really ignorant of the exact boundaries which separate the natural from the supernatural, we are very incompetent judges of what, in an ancient narrative, ought to be regarded as miraculous, and what ought not. As knowledge increases among men, miracles are always found to diminish in number ; for that which is above nature, in one age, is discovered to be within its limits in the very next. Measuring every thing by his own ignorance, man, in a rude state of society, is constantly surrounded with wonders and prodigies ; for which reason, when we read the early history of Pagan nations, we pass over their miracles either as matters of mere childishness—as the inventions of the fraudulent or the devices of the superstitious—but cannot be induced to consider them as a fair interpretation of nature, and far less as a proof of divine interposition.

Accustomed, nay compelled, by the laws of our existence upon earth, to confide in the order and stability of the material universe, the human mind reluctantly yields its belief to the testimony of remote ages in support of facts which, it is conjectured, may not have been carefully examined in connection with those physical causes which a more learned investigation, in modern times, has successfully brought to light. This prejudice of the intellect, for such to a certain extent it may be described, is strengthened in no small degree by the circumstance, that a trust in occasional suspensions of the regular course of nature continues to lurk at the present day, in the darker parts of the world; and, even of a large body of Christians it may be asserted, that the distance at which they still remain from the light of science and the knowledge of mental philosophy, may be measured, with considerable exactness, by the confidence which they repose in miraculous interposition.

I must rest satisfied with this general statement of the argument; leaving it to your private thoughts to follow out the train of reasoning which is thereby suggested. But do you not already perceive the grounds of the expediency to which our blessed Saviour alluded,

when he informed his disciples that they were to finish the work which he had begun? You cannot fail to be convinced that the proof, founded on an agency more exclusively supernatural, would have become gradually weaker every succeeding generation, particularly if the testimony proceeded through ages of ignorance, credulity, and superstition; whereas the evidence arising from a moral fact, or a simple historical event, never loses its value, but, on the contrary, becomes stronger and stronger in proportion to its antiquity, and as mankind grow more enlightened and more inquisitive.

It is, in short, the effect of experience, and of an enlarged knowledge of nature, to weaken the confidence of speculative minds in physical signs and wonders; and more especially because they find that men, before they are capable of making due inquiry into proximate causes, are too ready to believe such things; and, consequently, that even sincere and honest persons have been led, through their ignorance of the laws which regulate the succession of events in the material world, to proclaim a miracle where they had merely witnessed a novelty. But sound argument, profound knowledge, rational doctrines, and a beneficent morality, joined to wisdom, zeal, pureness of living, piety,

and disinterestedness,—all rendered effective by that demonstration of the spirit, and of power, which was manifested by the first preachers of our holy faith,—constitute a species of evidence which acquires additional weight as society improves in learning and reflection ; and, on this account, the proof arising from the propagation of the Gospel by the ministry of the Apostles, carries with it a degree of conviction which is most felt by the most thinking men, and which will always keep pace with the progress of science and of enlightened research.

To illustrate what I have now stated, may I not appeal to yourselves, and ask you, whether you are not more struck with the speech that St. Paul pronounced before Agrippa, or with the address which he delivered on Mars-hill at Athens, than you are with the account of the sick who were cured by means of the handkerchiefs and aprons which had touched the body of that holy man ? In all ages, the power of imagination has done much to remove diseases ; and the Roman Catholic, accordingly, has a thousand stories to tell of the wonderful effects produced upon the distempered, by the mere application of a piece of wood or of a rag of linen ; but no physical action on the nerves could have inspired the reasoning employed by

the great apostle of the Gentiles, or warmed the eloquence of St. Peter's first sermon; when the one almost induced the king, before whom he spoke, to become a Christian, and the other gained over three thousand of his countrymen to the faith of the Redeemer.

It was, therefore, expedient that our blessed Lord, having died for our sins and risen again for our justification, should ascend into the heavens, and leave to the ministry of his chosen servants the great work of converting the world; that men might be led by their judgment rather than by the mere authority of tradition; and acknowledge that their belief is founded not on the terror of the eye or of the ear, but on the evidence of a divine commission, exercised through the medium of human reason and on the ground of human motives.

It is a remarkable fact, as connected with the subject now before us, that the Apostles, although empowered to work miracles, do not appear to have performed one, in order to prove a doctrine or to establish a point of faith. The Redeemer, acting on the principle which we suppose him to have had in view, and which he himself adopted in his memorable conversation with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, seems to have recommended to his ministers to

employ, as their principal instrument for evangelizing the nations, the complete knowledge of divine truth with which they were to be supplied on the day of Pentecost. "He commanded us," says St. Peter, "to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead," and "that to him gave all the prophets witness."* We find, too, that St Paul everywhere pursued the same course. At Ephesus he went into the synagogue, "and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God: But when divers were hardened and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them."† He made no reference to the supernatural powers with which he was invested as an inspired servant of Christ; but having failed to convince his Jewish audience out of their own Scriptures, that Jesus was the Messiah, he left them to their stubborn incredulity. In a similar manner he conducted himself towards those of his countrymen whom he found at Rome: "And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodgings; to whom he

* Acts x. 42, 43.

† Acts xix. 8, 9.

“expounded and testified the kingdom of God,
 “persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of
 “the law of Moses and out of the Prophets,
 “from morning till evening. And some be-
 “lieved the things which were spoken, and
 “some believed not; and when they agreed
 “not among themselves, they departed.”* He
 did not propose to determine the interesting
 question on which they had reasoned, by an ap-
 peal to the omniscience and power of God ; but
 finding that they were immoveably fixed in
 their prejudices, he allowed the gainsayers to
 withdraw from his presence unconverted ; only
 reminding them of the description, contained in
 one of their prophetic writings, of the gross
 heart and the dull ear, which refused all access
 to the knowledge of divine things.†

On the ground, then, of the doctrine which I
 have endeavoured to establish, that the propaga-
 tion of Christian faith and knowledge through-
 out the earth was meant, by the Redeemer, to
 be effected by human means, I proceed to make
 a few practical observations applicable to the
 circumstances in which we are at present assem-
 bled.

* Acts xxviii. 23, 24, 25.

† See Note at the end of the Sermon.

It was expedient for our blessed Saviour to go away ; but he departed not from this world until he had secured the operation of two most powerful instruments to accomplish the object which had induced him to tabernacle among men : the aid of the Divine Spirit to animate and direct his church ; and the zeal, the eloquence, and steadfastness of the twelve Apostles whom he commissioned to preach his Gospel. Part of the service committed to the hands of those holy disciples has descended to us in these latter days ; and we, too, are commanded by the same authority to make the ways of Christ known upon earth, his saving health to all nations. We, indeed, possess not the power and the irresistible demonstration which were bestowed upon the first ministers of our religion, when they were sent forth to teach and to baptize the heathen world ; but, through the grace of God, we can imitate them in their much patience, in their labours, and in their watchings ; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the armour of righteousness on the right-hand and on the left, by being poor yet making rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things,

But the main point connected with the assurance of the text, is the determination on the

part of Almighty God, that the knowledge of salvation shall be extended to man through the instrumentality of man, and not by such supernatural means as would interfere with the regular course of his providence ; and hence, my brethren, our duty to the poor, in respect of religious instruction, is placed on the very same footing as the obligation to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked. As it is no longer expedient that the destitute should be supplied with bread created by a miracle, or that the sick should be healed by an immediate exercise of divine power, neither is it consistent with the laws of the moral government under which we are placed, that the ignorant should be instructed by a direct communication from heaven.

As, then, we are all satisfied that, unless exertions were made to procure food for those in whose hands the staff of life is broken, to supply garments to those who have no covering, and to give medicine to heal the sickness of such as have no friend or kinsman to minister to their necessities, many of our fellow creatures must sink under the pressure of hunger, nakedness, and disease : so, on the very same grounds, ought we to be convinced that, unless the means of instruction be afforded to our poor brethren, they must continue ignorant, depraved, and

hopeless; and that thousands of those for whom Christ died may, through our fault, perish for lack of knowledge. In proportion, therefore, as the soul is more precious than the body, and as eternity is more momentous than time, so the charity of enabling men to become acquainted with the things which belong to their everlasting peace, before they be for ever hid from their eyes, is not only more important in itself, but even more incumbent upon us, than the duty of providing for their natural wants.

I urge this consideration the more strongly, because it is well known that, in this Christian land, there are many humane individuals who contribute freely of their substance to assist the indigent and the unfortunate, who yet profess an avowed indifference in regard to the benefits of religious knowledge; being willing, as they choose to express it, to leave the care of souls and the interests of eternity in the hands of the Almighty Father of Spirits. But such persons, it is obvious, view this important matter in a wrong light; for it has pleased the Redeemer of the world to confide to the care of his faithful servants, to their charity and their zeal, the administration not only of the meat and drink which perish in the using, but also of that bread of which whosoever eateth shall ne-

ver die, and of that water which becometh in the soul of man a well of salvation, and springeth up into everlasting life. In both cases the principle of duty is the same; in both cases man is called upon to act as a mediator between the great God and the poor, the afflicted, and the ignorant; for when our Saviour said it was expedient that he should go away, he left this labour of love to his disciples in all ages; declaring, at the same time, that inasmuch as they should do it unto the least of his brethren they should do it unto himself.

Allow, me, then, to remind you, that the venerable Society which you represent here this day, has for its benevolent object the promotion of Christian knowledge in all parts of the British dominions, from the place where the sun riseth to where he hath his going down. In India a Christian church is forming under its auspices; a Christian university is raising its head; schools are planted and provided with books and teachers; and the natives of that extensive country are beginning to open their ears to the voice of the everlasting Gospel. But the poor of our own land constitute its principal care. For more than a hundred and thirty years have the members laboured faithfully and assiduously among the ignorant of their own people; and at

this moment several thousand seminaries of religious instruction derive benefit from their funds, in the form of bibles, prayer-books, and other works of piety and useful knowledge. In the course of last year, they expended more than L.55,000 in spreading amongst our countrymen the means of learning the will of God, and their own truest interests both in time and in eternity; in rooting out the baneful plants of infidelity which occasionally spring up to deform our land; and in confirming those principles which strengthen the foundations of morality, of social order, of peace, of prosperity, and of happiness. During the same period they have exerted themselves to give a version of the Holy Scriptures to those parts of Ireland which are still unacquainted with the English language; and they have succeeded in conferring a similar benefaction on the principality of Wales.

But to no branch of the reformed Episcopal Church have the Directors shewn greater regard than to that ancient Communion of which we ourselves are members. They have bound us to them by much good-will, and by many actual kindnesses. The poor Episcopalians, in the remoter parts of Scotland, have, on several occasions, had reason to bless the ever-active zeal of the Society for Promoting Christian

Knowledge. Books, and even money, have been sent to them, according to the several necessities of the applicants; and new means are, at the present hour, under consideration, for adding to their spiritual comforts, and for enabling them to join in the worship of God after the manner of their fathers. In this particular part of the kingdom, where our church draws fewer of her members from the lower class of the people, the direct claims upon the benefits of the venerable Institution of which I speak are not so numerous as they are elsewhere: but, even here, we are supplied at an easy rate with the means of doing much good, and, we hope, of preventing much evil: and those means, I beg leave to assure you, will always be extended according to your desires, and your several opportunities of contributing to the spiritual edification of your brethren in the Lord.

The principles on which this Society is conducted have recommended themselves to the approbation of all who have inquired into them with candour and Christian feeling. Though confined, in the selection of its members, to the United Church of England and Ireland, and the Episcopal Communion in Scotland, it is ever ready to extend its assistance to all denominations who have the same patriotic objects in

view ; and no class of men who have undertaken to disseminate the knowledge of true religion, or to check the spread of infidel opinions, have at any time been refused the most hearty countenance and co-operation. The motives in which it had its origin were entirely free from all partial or contracted sentiments ; and the spirit by which it has all along been animated refuses to make any distinctions among churchmen, but such as rest upon their more ardent zeal, and the greater constancy of their exertions, in the cause of our common faith. Like the blessed religion, the knowledge of which it labours to promote, it is friendly and tolerant towards all who endeavour to attain good ends by the use of proper means : and it is worthy of remark, that although it has done more for the people of Great Britain than has been effected by all the other religious associations which have been formed in these latter days, it has never, by the slightest breath of contention or rivalry, decomposed for a moment the public peace, or even given occasion to the most transient personal hostility.

In extending the benefit of instruction to their countrymen, the Patrons of this Society have never forgotten, that knowledge without religi-

ous principle is no blessing to the lower class of the people. Mere knowledge, in such a case, is the giving of wine to the giant, without retaining the power to direct his strength or to repress his violence. But the union of Christianity with the elements of a plain education, not only confers light and vigour upon the minds of the peasant and the artizan : it does much more; it guides their exertions towards praiseworthy objects, inspires them with the love of virtue, of peace, and of true independence, and, through the grace of God, prepares them for everlasting happiness in a more perfect state of being.— May the countenance of Heaven, therefore, continue to shine upon the labours of this venerable and most useful establishment; and may God, who is the strength of all them that put their trust in Him, mercifully accept our prayers for its furtherance; and because, through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good without Him, may he grant us the help of his grace, that, in keeping his commandments, we may please Him, both in will and deed, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now to God, &c.

Note referred to at p. 31.

To prevent any misconception that might arise from the manner in which the argument from miracles is handled in the text, I may be allowed to remind the reader, that there is

a distinction between the use of miracles as the means of proving a divine commission on the part of an inspired teacher, and the use of the same supernatural events as an instrument for establishing, at a remote period, the divine origin of the revelation which that teacher may have made. In the former case, the evidence is irresistible; whereas, in the latter case, the value of the proof resolves itself into the credibility of the testimony upon which it has reached our times. Neither of these considerations, however, interferes, in the smallest degree, with that devotional contemplation of the miracles of our Lord and his Apostles, which may be enjoyed by the sincere Christian as an exercise of faith and piety.

The experience of our Missionaries in different parts of the world, confirms, in some degree, the reasoning pursued in the text. In India, particularly, they have found, that an appeal to the miracles recorded in the Gospels makes little impression on the minds of the Brahmins; not because such manifestations of Almighty power are thought improbable, but because they are supposed to be very common in all religions, and even necessary to a general belief in the existence of the Deity. The Christians, accordingly, in that portion of the British dominions, have to bewail, not so much the incredulity of the people whom they wish to convert, as the passive, uninquiring disposition, with which they listen to a statement of the most mysterious doctrines and facts connected with our holy faith. The Hindoo not only admits all these, but produces, from the records of his own creed, instances of Divine interposition still more striking than any that are narrated by the Evangelists.

In Africa, on the other hand, the ordinary processes of the physical economy are so little understood, and the line which divides the natural from the wonderful is so vaguely drawn, that every form of evidence derived from miracles is received with equal facility and indifference. In the conception of a Caffre or a Boschman, the healing of the sick, and the opening of the eyes of the blind, would amount to nothing more than the proof of a very powerful charm or prevailing *fetiché*.

But, to come nearer to ourselves, let me ask, what is the general feeling throughout the Protestant world in regard to the miracles which occupy so large a portion of the Ecclesiastical annals of the Eastern and Western Churches? Is it not that while, in most cases, we acknowledge the honesty of the historians, we question the accuracy of their information, or their want of the requisite knowledge to discriminate between what was singular and what was supernatural? It is obvious, therefore, that the evidence which addresses itself to the reason and the reflection, is best suited to the nature of man, and to the laws of his present condition upon earth.

APPENDIX.

WE cannot but regret the apathy with which the principal Religious Associations of the Church of England have been viewed in Scotland,—the little interest their operations have excited amongst those whose exertions and liberality have evinced that they are neither indifferent to the cause of benevolence, nor to the prosperity of the Episcopal Church of which they are members.

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge holds the very highest rank amongst the religious associations of the present day. It has been long established, but it is only of late years that it has assumed that activity, and acquired those means, amongst us, which render it so deserving of our assistance. It is conducted entirely and exclusively by members of the Episcopal Church; and all its proceedings and means of instruction are founded on the doctrines and practice of that Church. At home, it has spread instruction with a liberal hand; indeed, there is scarcely a village or hamlet in England where its influence has not extended, by furnishing gratuitously, or at a cheap rate, Bibles, Prayer-books, and Tracts, for the People and for *Schools*, and, in many instances *lending Libraries* adapted for the use of the poor. During the last year the Society distributed to its members and the public 54,876 Bibles, 75,547 Testaments and Psalters, 146,668 Books of Common Prayer, 91,897 bound Books, and 1,092,844 Tracts. Great exertions have been made in procuring correct versions of the Bible and Book of Common Prayer in the *Irish* language. The Society has furnished *Gaelic* Bibles and Prayer-books. This year they have contributed L.100 towards the establishment of Episcopal Schools in the Highlands; and they have returned a favourable answer to an application for a grant towards erecting and endowing a Gaelic Chapel in Glasgow. A most important field of the Society's labours will be found in the colonies and dependencies of the British empire; but no object it has in view is more interesting than that of Christianizing India. That much has been attempted there by missionaries, in an injudicious manner, no one will deny. That many exaggerated accounts of conversions under ignorant

but zealous missionaries have been sent home, the effects of which were temporary and delusive, must likewise be admitted. The most rational ground of a hope of extending the Gospel to India is by the establishment of a regular permanent church; and it is upon this principle that the Church of England, through her Societies, now systematically proceeds.

Every thing is done, therefore, with a view to giving a *permanent* Episcopal ministry—a permanent establishment of schools—a permanent establishment of masters—permanent instructors of young men (converted natives,) in the requisites for preaching and teaching, and for their permanent support in these important characters.

The establishment of the Mission College at Calcutta, under the auspices of Bishop Middleton, the first prelate sent out to India, was a grand step in giving a permanency to the establishment of a Christian Church in that country. So highly was it commended by all interested in this great work, that the Church Missionary Society, in 1821, approving of the plan, and reposing a generous confidence in the Incorporated Society, gave a further donation of L.1000 to the College, (having before given L.5000,) adding a confident expectation that the same grant would be annually repeated. In the same excellent spirit, a vote of L.5000 was made by the British and Foreign Bible Society, “in aid of that important branch of the proposed operations of the College, the translation of the Scriptures into the languages of India.” As soon as the buildings were completed, the Incorporated Society sent out a collection of books, to the value of about L.1000, for the use of the College. The annual expenditure of the Society, on behalf of the College, is at present above L.4000.

It is most satisfactory to record the following resolution agreed to by the Bombay Committee; for it gives the opinion of persons who were capable, by their own experience, of estimating the prospects and object of the College:

“RESOLVED,—That this meeting, being impressed with a high sense of the principles and proceedings of the Society, is further persuaded that Bishop’s Mission College, founded by the Society near Calcutta, presents a safe and practicable method of propagating the Gospel among the nations of this country, by the gradual diffusion of knowledge, the superintendence and publication of religious tracts, the Liturgy and versions of Scripture, and the education of persons qualified to act as preachers of the Gospel and schoolmasters.”

To shew the effect of a systematic and well organized scheme for planting Christianity under the auspices of an established Episcopal Church, we quote an extract from the farewell speech made in the name of this Society to the lamented Bishop Heber, on his going out to India.

"Nine years have now elapsed since your lamented Predecessor entered upon the discharge of his Episcopal functions ; and that, which then could only afford a subject for conjecture and for hope, has become a matter of retrospect and of certainty. All the accounts which have reached the Society concur in stating, that the new measures have been attended with more complete success than, from the shortness of time during which they have been in operation, the most sanguine could have ventured to anticipate. Many of the impediments which, directly or indirectly, retarded the reception of the Gospel, have been removed. The establishment of a visible Church has opened an asylum to the convert from the taunts and injuries of the professors of his former faith. The progressive improvement effected in the lives and conversation of the European settlers has deprived the natives of one of their most powerful arguments against the truth of Christianity. They no longer look upon us as mere conquerors, greedy only of wealth and of dominion ; but as a virtuous and religious people, not less superior to them in moral goodness than in civilization and manners—in justice and benevolence, than in arts and arms. Their attachment to their caste, which seemed to present the most formidable obstacle to their conversion, has been overcome. The mists, which enveloped their understandings, are fast dissolving before the irradiating influence of Sacred Truth. The superstitious dread with which they regarded their deities, is giving place to juster conceptions of the Divine Nature ; and the priests of the idol of Juggernaut are compelled to bewail the decreasing numbers and diminished zeal of his votaries.

"What a variety of emotions is the cheering prospect, which has at length opened upon us, calculated to excite ! What gratitude to Almighty God for the blessing which He has been pleased to bestow upon the labours of the infant Church ! What reverence for the memory of the distinguished Prelate, whose wisdom and piety have, under the direction of Providence, conducted those labours to so successful an issue ! How powerful an encouragement does it hold out, how strict an obligation does it impose, stedfastly to persevere in the prosecution of those holy designs, till the triumph over the powers of darkness in our Indian empire shall be complete, and no other vestige of the ancient idolatry shall remain than the deserted temples of the divinities who were its objects. Nothing now appears to be wanting but that the number of labourers should bear a due proportion to the abundance of the harvest which is spread before them ; and our confidence in the enlightened piety of our Rulers forbids the supposition that this want will long remain unsupplied."

Every thing from the amiable Heber is interesting. His primary charge to the clergy of the diocese of Calcutta is peculiarly beautiful, and well calculated to excite in the minds of

the most indifferent, an interest on the subject of the establishment of Christianity in the East. The following is an extract from his reply to the speech of which the last quotation was a part.

“Nor, my Lord Archbishop, will I seek to dissemble my conviction, that, slow as the growth of truth must be in a soil so strange and hitherto so spiritually barren—distant as the period may be when any very considerable proportion of the natives of India shall lift up their hands to the Lord of Hosts,—yet, in the degree of progress which has been made, enough of promise is given to remove all despondency as to the eventual issue of our labours. When we recollect, that one hundred years have scarcely passed away, since the first Missionaries of this Society essayed, under every imaginable circumstance of difficulty and discouragement, to plant their grain of mustard seed in the Carnatic; when we look back to those apostolic men, with few resources save what this Society supplied to them,—without encouragement—without support—compelled to commit themselves, not to the casual hospitality, but to the systematic and bigoted inhospitality of the natives; seated in the street, because no house would receive them, acquiring a new and difficult language at the doors of the schools, from the children tracing their letters on the sand,—can we refrain not only from admiring the faith and patience of those eminent Saints, but from comparing their situation with the port which Christianity now assumes in the East, and indulging the hope that one century more, and the thousands of converts which our missionaries already number, may be extended into a mighty multitude, who will look back with gratitude to this Society as the first dispenser of those sacred truths which will then be their guide and their consolation? What would have been the feelings of Swartz, (“clarum et venerabile nomen Gentibus;” to whom even the heathen, whom he failed to convince, looked up as something more than mortal.)—what would have been his feelings had he lived to witness Christianity in India *established* under the protection of the ruling power, by whom four-fifths of that vast continent is held in willing subjection? What, if he had seen her adorned and strengthened by that primitive and regular form of government which is so essential to her reception and stability among a race like our eastern fellow-subjects! What forbids, I ask, that when in one century our little one is become a thousand, in a century more that incipient desertion of the idol shrines, to which the learned Prelate so eloquently alluded, may have become total, and be succeeded by a resort of all ranks and ages to the altars of the Most High; so that a parochial clergy may prosecute the work which the missionary has begun, and ‘the gleanings of Ephraim may be more than the vintage of Abiezer?’”

The same Society, in taking leave of the present Bishop of

Calcutta, adverted to that most important part of the system—the establishment of *Native Schools*. The following is an extract from that address :

“ But the Society begs leave to draw your attention more particularly to the Native Schools ; a subject indeed which has been already brought under your Lordship’s notice by the General Committee. Such Schools have long existed as appendages to our missions ; and the faithful servants of God who have laboured in that vineyard, well understood and appreciated their importance. They are now established in the presidencies, and especially in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, on a large scale, and with a fair prospect of success ; and are conducted upon that invaluable system of mutual instruction, which was originally discovered and brought into action within the limits of your diocese by a revered individual, to whom the poor of our people and the cause of Christian education are deeply indebted. In these Schools the Scriptures are read as a book of elementary instruction, without opposition from the natives, or any appearance of dislike. Here, it would seem, *a great door, and effectual*, is opened to the preaching and reception of the Gospel. For it may reasonably be hoped that many, whose minds have been thus seasoned in early life with the words of truth and soberness, will see, when they grow up to manhood, the folly and wickedness of their popular creed and superstitions ; will listen with gladness to those messengers of Christ who propound to them the truths, and ply them with the lessons of godliness, to which they had been accustomed in their childhood ; will renounce the errors and idols of their forefathers, and become sincere and willing converts to our pure and holy religion. Under these convictions of their tendency to advance the good work of conversion, a separate fund has been formed for their support. And the Society entertains a sanguine hope that, under your protection, they may, through God’s blessing upon the instruments which he vouchsafes to employ, serve to promote the knowledge of the Gospel, and to extend the boundaries of the kingdom of heaven.”

Upon such exertions, and (by God’s blessing) upon such successes of the Society, both at home and abroad, we rest the cause. We could not but remark the apathy existing in our land towards spreading the knowledge and diffusing the benefits of Christianity, and we could not but deplore the neglect of a Society which has such strong claims upon our notice—a neglect which we attribute solely to a want of consideration of the nature of those claims. We have thought it our duty so far to bring forward the subject ; for the rest, the Reports of the Society are easily procured, and give information which we think will excite a general interest upon the subject in those who read them with attention. If the views taken in this discourse be correct, to give our aid to such Societies becomes a high and important branch of Christian duty ; and our support of the Society for Promoting Christian Know-

ledge, is not merely a question of an annual subscription or of attendance to contribute to a collection for its funds—but the question becomes involved with the interests we feel for the spiritual welfare of mankind, the interest we take in the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the desire we have that it may be established in every country and in every heart.

Let it be ever remembered, that Christianity is to be considered as a trust deposited with us in behalf of others, on behalf of mankind, as well as for our own instruction. How far the venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has discharged this trust, its Reports will testify. We should be sorry, however, in stating our preference of this Institution, as at once a Missionary and a Bible Society, to be thought in any way to reflect in an unfriendly manner towards any similar exertions, by whatever sect or whatever party they may be made. We admire their zeal, though we may regret their want of prudence and of judgment, and can rejoice in the success of their endeavours, though differing both on points of doctrine and as to the means made use of to accomplish their purpose. Such is the sanctity of the cause, that it can redeem a thousand errors; and we pity the hardness of disposition that can sneer at any one who, for such a purpose, leaves his country and his home at an age when associations are formed and ties are multiplied which it is misery to break. We pity the want of feeling which can be indifferent to the labours of those who exchange the comforts of home for the dangers and the fatigues—the vexation and the opposition,—the new and perplexing scenes of missionary labours, and who, in an unhealthy and debilitating climate, part with the comforts of existence for the sake of the cross. Who would censure any Missionary going forth, as he has been feelingly described, “with the Bible in his hand and his Saviour in his heart,”* to preach the glad tidings of redemption to the heathen world.

Having paid a willing and sincere tribute of Christian charity to other missionary associations, we close this recommendation of the pure and peaceful Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge—an association whose zeal is untainted with bigotry, and whose piety is unalloyed by fanaticism, “by thanking God for the blessings which has attended its labours, and expressing a hope that such encouraging results will be followed up by increased exertions. An immense field now opens before it, and it is not too much to entertain a humble confidence, that the same Almighty hand which has raised the Church from small beginnings to her present flourishing condition, will in like manner enable the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge to diffuse the principles and enforce the practice of the Gospel, as long as the name of England endures, and as far its empire extends.”—*Society's Report for 1825.*

* Bishop Hurd.

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At the Annual Meeting held in St John's Chapel, on Thursday 13th March 1828, the Honourable Lord Medwyn in the chair, the following Noblemen and Gentlemen were unanimously elected Office-bearers of the District Committee of the South and West of Scotland :

PRESIDENT.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Moray.

GENERAL VICE PRESIDENTS.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Rosebery.

The Right Hon. the Lord Chief Baron.

The Hon. Lord Medwyn.

The Right Rev. Bishop Gleig.

The Right Rev. Bishop Sandford.

Sir John Hope, Bart. of Craigball.

Adam Duff, Esq. Sheriff of Edinburgh.

Colin Mackenzie, Esq. of Portmore.

LOCAL VICE-PRESIDENTS.

George Forbes, Esq.
Patrick Lindesay, Esq. } *for Diocese of Edinburgh.*
James Skinner, Esq.

Thomas Graham Stirling, Esq. of Airth, }
Charles Alexander Moir, Esq. of Leckie, } *for Diocese of Brechin.*

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Professor Sandford,

John Robert Skinner, Esq. *Treasurer.*—Rev. Dr Russell, *Secretary.*

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